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## Bones' Boy Bolivar's School Pranks OR, More Fun At Fossil Hall.

BY "FRED,"  
AUTHOR OF THE GREAT BONES SERIES OF COMIC STORIES.



PROFESSOR FOSSIL FLUNG OPEN THE DOOR AND PROMPTLY RECEIVED A BLOW FROM THE HICKORY STICK THAT KNOCKED HIM OVER BACKWARD.

### CHAPTER I.

#### BOLIVAR AS AN INVENTOR.

Who could have stolen his wig and false eye the second time? Professor Fossil asked himself, as he double-locked his door and began pacing the room in a rage which we shall not attempt to describe.\*

Plainly it was not Henderson Gawkley this time.

"The scoundrel must have some fellow-conspirator," mused the old man. "This accounts for the ingenuity of some of the tricks that have been played on me. I scarcely thought that Gawkley had sense enough to originate them. I will probe this matter to the very bottom. But first I must get a new wig. Who could

\* See "Bones' Boy Bolivar at Boarding School," Old Cap. Collier Library No. 799.



have pulled that towel off my head and subjected me to ridicule before the entire school? I'd give five hundred dollars to know. The idea of such an insult to Professor Frothingham Fossil of Fossil Hall!"

And, almost foaming at the mouth, the professor kicked at the college cat, which had somehow sneaked into the room.

He missed the animal, and his best-beloved corn went up against the corner of the bedstead with terrific force.

"—— ———!" remarked the old man, and he repeated the observation several times with an enthusiasm so intense that Bolivar and his pal, who were listening outside the door, were highly amused.

Gradually the professor's reckless abandon gave place to a pensive thoughtfulness, and he sat down and indited another telegram to the wigmaker.

He spared neither words nor expense to make his meaning plain, and when the message was completed he rung for Phelim.

In a few minutes the artless Hibernian gamboled into the room, doing his level best to keep a straight face; for he had been a witness to Professor Fossil's recent misfortune and had been highly diverted thereby.

"What are you twisting your face into such horrible shapes for, you scoundrel?" demanded the professor, heatedly.

Phelim tried to look very serious, but failed, and burst into a roar of laughter.

"Excuse me, perfissor," he said, "but indade it worr the most comicalest soight iver I saw. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence, you rascal!" roared the old man.

"Yes, sorr. Ho, ho, ho!"

"Another sound and I will discharge you."

By a superhuman effort Phelim controlled his merri-ment, for he did not want to lose his job.

"You see this telegram?" said the professor.

"I do, sorr."

"Take it to the office at once."

"Yes, sorr."

"And tell that incompetent, illiterate operator that if he makes another mistake Professor Frothingham Fossil will report him to his superintendent and procure his summary discharge."

"Yes, sorr."

With this brief response and a face that looked as if he had been attending a series of funerals of his nearest and best friends, Phelim meandered thence.

He was saving his laugh until he was out of hearing of the Hall.

In the playground he was met by the reckless Bolivar, who tried to induce him to exhibit the telegram.

But Phelim was too fly for that.

"I'll not do it," he said. "I dunno fwhat it was ye done wid the other wan, but ye'll get no chance at this wan. Go away wid ye!"

"Very well, Phelim," said Bolivar. "I will not condescend to reply to your foul insinuations, knowing that if you are left to yourself your conscience will be its own accuser."

And he ambled in the direction of the Hall, arm-in-arm with his pal, both of them sweetly warbling:

"I love my school teacher dear,  
Oh, very much, indeed.  
And feel that while at Fossil Hall  
I've everything I need.

My studies are my chief delight,  
For play I do not care,  
I'd work more if I did not fear  
My health it would impair."

In justice to Bolivar we must say that he was always at the head of his class, with his pal not very far away, and that if he had only been able to repress his love of fun he would have been a model pupil.

Well, the professor's telegram went safely, and the next morning the wig came.

It was all right this time, and the old man donned it and went down stairs with a face like a thundercloud.

The boys were all seated in the schoolroom in compliance with an order of the professor's, sent down by Phelim, and the teachers were in their places.

As Professor Fossil stalked in, his big head surmounted by his shiny new wig, which was fully as small as its predecessor, there was a grin on every face, except Bolivar's and his pal's.

They looked as serious and pensive as if they had been at a funeral or a negro minstrel show.

"What is the meaning of these manifestations of mirth?" demanded the professor, hotly. "Is this the result of my careful discipline?"

Bolivar and his pal looked about them with a pained expression, and most of the boys drew on straight faces.

But the unlucky Henderson Gawkley, in spite of his past painful experiences, gave utterance to an audible giggle.

"This is too much!" roared the professor. "It is simply infamous! Gawkley, come up here!"

Henderson obeyed, sniveling hysterically.

He knew what was coming, and he was not disappointed.

It was the old, old story, as the poet hath it.

After he had been thrashed in the most thorough and scientific manner, he was sent to his room to be imprisoned on bread and water for two days.

It was pretty rough on Gawkley, but on account of his tale-bearing proclivities, he did not get as much sympathy from his schoolmates as he would otherwise have received.

"Now pursue your studies," said the professor, fiercely, "and let the scene you have just witnessed be a lesson to you. We will see who is running this institution, Henderson Gawkley or I."

He ran it that day, at least, for not a single infringement of his rules occurred; and the old man went to bed quite satisfied with the result of his discipline.

"I could manage those boys with perfect ease," he soliloquized, as he hung up his wig in a safe place, "if it were not for Henderson Gawkley. I am strongly tempted to expel him, yet I am opposed to that method of punishment, for it involves a pecuniary loss. No, I will stick to the rattan for the present. Ah, I wish all my pupils were like those two New York boys, Bolivar Bones and his friend."

And he went to sleep and dreamed that Bolivar and his pal had large, white wings growing out on their shoulder blades.

But they hadn't.

Even while the professor was luxuriating in these visions, they were at work on a new scheme for lending variety to his life.

They were just outside the door, putting up a little apparatus invented by Bolivar.

It consisted of a stout hickory stick, which they



fastened against the wall outside the door in a horizontal position at the height of an average man's head.

A strong iron spring was attached to it in such a manner that when the door was opened it would cause the stick to fly out and give the luckless cranium of whoever happened to be in the way a whack that would be likely to leave a permanent impression.

This mission accomplished, the stick would fly back in its place, the sound of its concussion with the wall being deadened by a cushion arranged for the purpose. Then it was ready for business again.

The two boys managed to put up this contrivance without making any noise, and when it was done they returned quietly to their rooms and slept peacefully.

Professor Fossil arose the next morning in a somewhat better humor than usual.

He put on his new wig, and arranged the shade over his eye before the mirror.

"I believe," he mused, as he put the finishing touches to his toilet, "that I have at last effectually quelled the spirit of mischief in this school. After the punishment that Henderson Gawkley has undergone, he will not venture to brave my wrath again; nor is it likely that I have anything to fear from his confederates, whoever they may be. These boys have grasped the idea at last," continued the old man as he unlocked his door, "that they cannot trifle with Frothingham Fos——"

He did not finish the sentence.

Other matters claimed his immediate attention, and he had no more time just then for soliloquizing.

At the instant that he reached the second syllable of his illustrious name he opened the door far enough to release the spring and——

Thwack!

Professor Fossil was an expert in astronomy, and had spent many hours of his life with his right eye glued against the peep-hole of a telescope, but in the second that followed that "thwack" he saw more stars than had greeted his vision in the whole of his previous career.

He staggered back with a howl.

For a few moments he was so stunned that he didn't know what had happened.

Then it occurred to him that some one had struck him, and he rushed out into the hall, holding onto his nose, which was bleeding profusely.

No one was in sight.

Bolivar and his pal were not far off, but they thought that it would be in bad taste for them to step forward and offer their sympathy just at that moment.

The old man returned to his room and closed the door.

"I cannot go down in this state," he said, glancing in the mirror at his shirt-front, which was covered with blood. "I will ring for Phelim to bring me a clean shirt from the laundry, and then I will see what can be done about this matter. And woe to the boy whom I find guilty!"

He touched the bell.

In a few minutes Phelim's knock sounded upon the door.

"At last!" exclaimed the impatient professor.

He stepped forward and opened the door.

The next moment the Irishman received a hard blow on the head from the stick.

The howl he uttered could have been heard half a mile away.

And the professor was as much astonished as Phelim.

The spring worked so quickly that he could not tell what had struck the Irishman; but his impression was that some unknown person had thrown something at him.

"Begorra, perfissor," shouted Phelim, "I'm only a workin' man, but ye have no roight to thrate me that a-way."

"Nonsense, you fool!" returned the professor. "I didn't hit you."

"Sure you must t'ink me a fool to belave that. Don't you thry it ag'in; or, bedad, I'll defind mesilf, perfissor an' all as ye are."

"Bah!"

"I mane what I say!"

"Pooh!"

And the old man slammed the door shut with considerable violence, leaving Phelim on the outside.

He had forgotten all about why he had sent for the Irishman, and seeing that the muscular Hibernian was in a white-heat of rage, he thought it well to put the door between them.

But Phelim looked upon the matter differently.

He was pretty mad about the blow he thought the professor had given him, and when the door was slammed in his face he simply boiled over.

"I'll allow no wan to insult me like that," he howled.

He threw open the door, shouting:

"Perfissor Fos——"

Again the utterance of that great man's name was interrupted.

Out came the stick again, and again——

"Thwack!"

And it was Phelim's head that received the blow.

After that the Irishman did not care what he did.

It was a matter of indifference to him whether he lost his place or not.

All he wanted was revenge—with a large R.

He rushed into the room and "went for" his distinguished employer.

We have received a tolerably explicit account of the battle from the only eye-witnesses, Bolivar and his pal, but we shall not inflict the painful details upon the reader.

Professor Fossil was no match, physically, for Phelim, and he received a pretty severe pummeling.

When the Irishman had finished the job, he marched out, muttering:

"If ye'd been twinty toimes a perfissor, I'd ha' give ye the same. Phelim Finnegan takes blows from no wan livin' widout returnin' thim."

When the festive Milesian strode through the hall he did not see Bolivar or his pal; the two artless youths had dematerialized for the time being.

Professor Fossil slowly arose from the reclining position which Phelim had induced him to assume.

If there was a madder man than Phelim Finnegan within four hundred miles, it was this same learned professor.

He made several remarks, but in justice to our readers and ourselves we refrain from giving them, and will content ourselves with stating that they were not of a complimentary nature to Phelim.

After a while the old man got himself in shape, buttoned his coat up to the neck so as to conceal his soiled shirt-front, and muttered:

"Now, then, to go down stairs, discharge that ruffianly Irishman, and institute a most searching investigation into this mysterious affair. We shall see whether



the classic precincts of Fossil Hall are to be disgraced by any further outrages."

He flung open the door, and promptly received a blow from the hickory stick that knocked him over backward.

Just as he was picking himself up Professor Whaler, one of his assistants, entered.

He had come up to see why his superior did not come down to the recitation-room.

"Why, what is the matter, Professor Fossil?" he asked, as he helped the old man to his feet.

"Matter, sir?" returned the professor. "The matter is that one of the most infamous and daring outrages of the present century has been committed, and that I have been its victim."

"Good gracious!"

"You may well say 'good gracious,' Professor Whaler. Professor, did you see any one in the hall as you came up?"

"No, professor."

"Close the door, if you please."

Professor Whaler did so.

Then the old man told him what had happened.

"Now, professor," he said, in conclusion, "will you assist me to solve this mystery?"

"Most assuredly I will," was the prompt reply.

"Very good. Then let us go down stairs at once and question the boys closely. My suspicions point strongly to Henderson Gawkley."

"But he is locked in his dormitory."

"He may have escaped. But we shall see what we shall see. Come, professor."

They did see something.

They saw a large variety of assorted stars.

For just as they were about to leave the room, arm-in-arm, out came the old hickory stick again, giving each of the professors a blow on the face.

When Professor Whaler had recovered his breath an idea struck him and hit him nearly as hard as the stick had.

He rushed out into the hall, and in about four seconds had discovered the cause of the trouble.

"This is infamous!" shouted Professor Fossil, when the thing was explained to him. "Oh, rest assured that Henderson Gawkley shall suffer for this."

"Nonsense, professor!" returned Professor Whaler.

"Eh?"

"I say nonsense. How could Gawkley have had anything to do with it when he was locked in his room at the time the contrivance was put up?"

"That remains to be seen," said Professor Fossil, sagely.

"You will find that Gawkley is innocent."

"We shall see."

"Besides, there is another that I suspect."

"Ah, indeed, Professor Whaler?"

"Yes. I saw a hickory stick that looked remarkably like this one in the hands of one of the boys last night."

"Ah, we have something to work upon at last! Who was the boy?"

"Bolivar Bones."

"What?"

Professor Whaler repeated the assertion.

"And do you actually mean to tell me," demanded Professor Fossil, "that you for one moment suspect that lad?"

"I do."

"Professor Whaler," said the old man, "I believed you

to be a man of more intelligence. Why, Bolivar Bones would be incapable of such an act."

"I don't agree with you."

"How you can differ with me upon such a point, Professor Whaler, is a profound mystery to me, and greatly lowers you in my estimation."

"I can't help that; the evidence is against Bolivar."

"Evidence—what evidence? You saw a hickory stick in his hand yesterday. Well, I had a hickory stick in my hand yesterday; do you therefore suspect me of complicity in the affair?"

"You are talking nonsense, Professor Fossil."

"What?" roared the old man. "I, Frothingham Fossil, talking nonsense! Be careful, Wilmington Whaler, or you will go too far for your own good."

"I——"

"Silence! I will pursue this investigation alone—you need trouble yourself no further in the matter."

"Very well, Professor Fossil!"

"I shall, as a matter of form, question Bolivar, and you will see by his replies that he knows no more about this outrage than the man in the moon."

The two professors went down to the recitation-room, and Professor Fossil ascended the platform.

All the boys were in the room, and it was so still that you could have heard a coupling-pin drop.

"Bolivar Bones, come up here!" ordered the old man.

Bolivar meandered up to the desk with his usual saintly expression of countenance.

"Do you know anything about a rascally contrivance that was placed outside the door of my apartment last night?" demanded the professor.

"No, sir," replied Bolivar, promptly.

"Did I not tell you so?" said the old man, turning to Professor Whaler in triumph. "After this, perhaps, you will have a greater degree of confidence in Frothingham Fossil's judgment. Bolivar, you may return to your seat."

This ended the investigation so far as Bolivar was concerned; and of course the young rascal felt encouraged to pursue his wild, reckless career.

## CHAPTER II.

### A GREAT LECTURE.

On the Saturday following the events related in our last, Professor Fossil went to New York and procured a new glass eye.

It was, like its predecessor, too large for him, and of a different shade from his real eye, but as he was pleased it was no one else's business.

The next morning he and his pupils attended church as usual.

"I have a notice of some importance to give," said the Reverend Dr. Grout after the first hymn had been sung. "I have from time to time received numerous requests to deliver my lecture, 'Ancient and Modern Egypt,' in Hocusville. I have at last decided to yield to what is evidently a popular demand, and shall give the lecture in this house next Wednesday evening at eight o'clock. Admission, twenty-five cents; children, fifteen cents, and special rates to large parties."

As he made the last remark he glanced significantly at Professor Fossil's pupils.



Bolivar was watching the professor, and saw upon his countenance a sneer which he did not attempt to hide.

Even the old man's glass eye seemed to gleam with scorn as he listened to the announcement.

The fact is Professor Fossil had devoted a good deal of time to the study of Egyptology, and was laboring under the impression that he knew a good deal more about it than any one else within twenty-five thousand miles of Hocusville.

As for Dr. Thunderby Grout's pretensions in that direction, the professor had always ridiculed them, asserting that the learned doctor knew no more about Egypt than a rooster knows about algebra.

Observing the sneer, Dr. Grout went on, somewhat heatedly.

"I need scarcely say that my knowledge of Egyptology is intimate and profound."

The professor smiled sarcastically.

"And," continued the doctor, his eyes flashing fire, "it is only the degraded and illiterate of our community who will fail to be present."

This shot did not worry Professor Fossil any; he only put his handkerchief up to his face to conceal his manifestations of merriment.

The doctor was pretty mad, and devoted a good deal of his prayer to a petition that "those among us to whom is entrusted the education and guidance of youth, although they may be notoriously unfit for their high calling, may be mercifully led to a knowledge of their own incompetence and folly."

This made the professor pretty mad; but he knew he could not talk back in church, so he contented himself with grinding his teeth.

Now Bolivar had heard of this proposed lecture of Dr. Grout's, and had thought up a little plan by which he fancied he could turn the affair into a source of amusement for himself and his equally unscrupulous companions.

On the way home from church he and his pal managed to walk beside the old professor; and when they were about half way to the hall our hero said:

"Oh, how I wish I could hear Dr. Grout's lecture!"

"So do I," chipped in his pal. "I have always been so much interested in everything pertaining to Egypt."

"Well," snorted the professor, prancing along like an old war-horse, "you would not learn much from that man, Thunderby Grout."

"Do you really mean that, professor?" asked Bolivar in accents of wonder.

"Do I mean it? Certainly I mean it! Why, I should not consent to the attendance of any of my pupils at the so-called lecture."

"Oh, professor!"

"I mean what I say. Grout's knowledge of the subject is of the most superficial nature."

"You are a great authority on Egyptian matters, are you not, professor?" asked Bolivar artlessly.

"Most assuredly I am," returned Professor Fossil pompously.

"Oh, how much you know!" broke in Bolivar's pal, determined not to be left out in the cold.

"Oh, how nice it would be to hear Professor Fossil lecture on Egypt!" gushed Bolivar.

"Such a lecture would undoubtedly be of great value to you, boys," said the professor, "and I have one in my desk which I wrote some months ago; but, unfortunately, my duties as Principal of Fossil Hall engross all my time."

"Oh, is not that too bad?" cried Bolivar; "but do you not think that you could be induced to deliver the lecture to the pupils, Professor Fossil?"

"Possibly I may at some future day," said the old man.

Just then he happened to see Henderson Gawkley smiling at a pretty girl in a window, and promptly administered a series of cuffs to the unfortunate youth, forgetting for the time all about the lecture.

But Bolivar did not forget about it.

The professor was now started on the subject, and the youth intended to keep the ball rolling until he heard the lecture.

Nothing more was said on the subject until late Wednesday afternoon, when Bolivar pranced into Professor Fossil's private office, a letter in his hand, and his face wearing an expression of pleased anxiety.

"Oh, professor," he said, "here is a letter for you."

"Ah, indeed, Bolivar!" smiled the old man. "Well, let me have it. Where did you get it?"

"It was handed to me by Percival Grout."

The professor's face darkened.

Percival Grout was Dr. Grout's son, a lad of about Bolivar's age, with the reputation of being the biggest "dare-devil" in the whole county.

And he deserved it; like many ministers' sons, he did not take after his father.

Although he was not an attendant at Fossil Hall, he and Bolivar had managed to scrape an acquaintance, and he had agreed to assist our hero in this trick on his father and Professor Fossil.

"It was given you by Dr. Grout's son, eh?" said the old man as he took the letter. "Why, it appears to be in the doctor's handwriting."

"It is, sir," said Bolivar. "Percival told me what was in it. Oh, I do hope you will go!"

And he rolled his eyes nearly wrongside out.

"Go? Go where?" demanded the professor.

"To the church to-night."

"What!" exclaimed the old man. "I, Frothingham Fossil, go to hear that compound of effrontery and idiocy, Thunderby Grout, lecture upon a subject upon which I have been thoroughly posted since my boyhood days? Bolivar, you amaze me! Do you think for one moment that I——"

"You don't understand me, professor," interrupted Bolivar. "Oh, please read the letter!"

Thus conjured the old man, who began to feel very curious as to the contents of the epistle, tore open the envelope.

A closely-written sheet met his gaze, and this is what he read:

Wednesday afternoon.

"My Dear Professor Fossil—May one, who has always been an admirer of your great and universally acknowledged genius, ask a great favor at your hands? You are aware that I am announced to lecture at the church to-night on 'Ancient and Modern Egypt.' Many tickets have been sold, and a crowded house is assured. But I am, almost at the last moment, called out of town to the bedside of a dying fourth cousin. I cannot disobey the summons; I must go. But I do not feel that I ought to disappoint the large audience which will be on hand to-night thirsting for knowledge about Egypt. 'What is it my duty to do?' I asked myself when the summons came, and the reply instantly suggested itself: 'Ask Professor Fossil, America's greatest Egyptologist, to appear in your place. The audience will be disappointed, but agreeably so, and you will have more



than done your duty to the public.' This is what my conscience said, and I could not disregard its admonitions. May I, therefore, beg that you will lecture in my place? I am sure that what you will have to say will possess the highest interest and value to all who may have the good fortune to hear it. I should mention that you will receive the sum of fifty dollars for your services from the trustees of my church. Hoping to receive a favorable reply by bearer, I remain,

"Very sincerely yours,

"THUNDERBY GROUT, D. D."

The old professor looked up, a gratified smirk upon his face.

"Really," he remarked, "the doctor is highly complimentary. I had no idea that I was so thoroughly appreciated by my fellow townsmen, particularly by Dr. Grout. You say that you are acquainted with the contents of this letter, Bolivar?"

"Percival told me what they were, sir," replied our young friend. "Oh, professor, you will go, won't you?"

"Ahem! I scarcely know, but I am inclined to think that I may as well accede to the doctor's request."

"Shall I tell Percival so, sir?"

"You may do so."

"But isn't there something on the other side of the sheet, sir?"

The professor scanned the paper.

"Ah, yes, a postscript."

And he read the following:

"P. S.—I must inform you of a painful family secret, which I would rather have left untold, but of which I feel it my duty to apprise you. I have a twin brother who is so much like me that it is almost impossible to tell us apart. He is not a clergyman; in fact, to be perfectly frank with you, he keeps a large liquor saloon in a neighboring city, and is a bold, wicked man. He has often taken advantage of our extraordinary resemblance to play tricks of a most reprehensible nature upon me, and I am informed on good authority that he intends attempting to personate me at the lecture to-night. I can scarcely credit the rumor, yet it may be so. Should he appear in the church please see that he is delivered into the hands of the proper authorities. Show this to the sexton, and tell him in my name to handle the fellow without gloves. T. G., D. D."

The professor was much pleased to be "let into" this "family secret."

"Humph!" he muttered. "It will not be safe for the fellow to trifle with me. I will see that he is summarily dealt with."

"What did you say, professor?" asked Bolivar, meekly.

In reply the old man told him the entire story, not ill pleased to have the opportunity of spreading this report about the doctor.

"Oh, is not that awful?" cried Bolivar, casting his eyes up to the ceiling.

"It is, indeed, very lamentable. Well, I will write a brief reply to Dr. Grout. You may tell Percival to come in here and I will give it to him."

By the time that the letter was finished Percival Grout stood at the door, hat in hand.

He was a tall, pale-faced, long-haired youth, who looked almost as sanctimonious as Bolivar.

"Convey my compliments to your father, my lad," said the professor in his most stilted manner, "and see that he gets this note at once."

"Yes, professor."

And with a profound bow the young rascal vanished.

We need not state that Dr. Grout never received the note, which would have surprised him a good deal; for of course, the epistle to which it was a reply had never emanated from his pen.

So far the boys' scheme had worked smoothly, the next step in the proceedings it was Percival's duty to take.

We will here state that the learned Dr. Grout had a room fitted up in the garret of his house as a study.

When he was writing, the slightest sound disturbed him, and this study of his was as nearly noise-proof as he could make it.

It was approached by a trap-door, and was isolated from the rest of the house.

About half an hour before the time appointed for the lecture the old gentleman went up to his study to get his manuscript, as Percival had known he would.

The young rascal quickly followed him, and fastened the trap-door on the under side.

The clergyman was a prisoner in his study.

As soon as he discovered this painful fact he shouted for help, stamped on the door; in short, did all he could to attract the attention of some one and obtain his release.

But as he did not succeed, for the simple reason that there was no one in the house except Percival, and he, of course, paid no attention to his father's demands to be let out.

In the meantime, what was going on at the church?

Well, a large audience were assembling, all anxious to hear what Dr. Grout had to say about Egypt.

At about five minutes before eight, to the surprise of every one, Professor Fossil pranced in and ascended the platform.

He had already interviewed the sexton, and directed him to "bounce" Dr. Grout's double if that individual should appear.

Smiling right and left, the old man stepped to the front and opened a big roll of manuscript about the size of an ordinary barber's pole.

"Ladies and Gentlemen," he began, "I deeply regret to state that your esteemed pastor, the Reverend Dr. Thunderby Grout, who expected to be the lecturer of the evening, has been suddenly called away.

"While it was a matter of profound sorrow to him that he was unable to deliver his lecture to an assemblage as intelligent as Hocusville was sure to furnish, he consoled himself with the thought that there was one at hand who could ably take his place.

"That one was my humble self, Frothingham Fossil, A. M.

"As you are all doubtless aware, I have for many years been a student of Egyptology, and possess a reputation which I may say without egotism is second to none.

"Knowing this to be the case, Dr. Grout, when he found that it would be impossible for him to be present to-night, requested me to take his place, and I cheerfully consented to do so and to deliver my lecture 'Egypt as it Was and as it Is.'

"Should any present be dissatisfied with this change they will have their money refunded at the door."

And the professor beamed upon the audience, ex-



pecting to have his remarks rewarded with tumultuous applause.

But they were not.

For a few moments a large, dark-gray silence reigned; then, to the old man's chagrin, about a third of the audience got up and made tracks for the door.

Then arose upon the air the cheerful click of the quarters as the urbane doorkeeper dealt them out to the retiring throng.

Professor Fossil was mad enough to rush down the aisle and "tackle" the unappreciative multitude single-handed; but he controlled himself as well as he could and said, with what he intended to be a bitterly sarcastic smile:

"In every community there is a certain proportion of persons destitute of any appreciation of what is highest and noblest in art and science, and I perceive that Hocusville is no exception to this rule.

"But it is not to this class that I wish to address

more strongly than does that which I have made my life study—the history of Egypt.

"Egypt! How many thoughts that classic name arouses! As I gaze into your intelligent faces I am reminded——"

What Professor Fossil was reminded of will never be known, for at that moment an elderly man, in a white heat of rage, rushed into the church, howling:

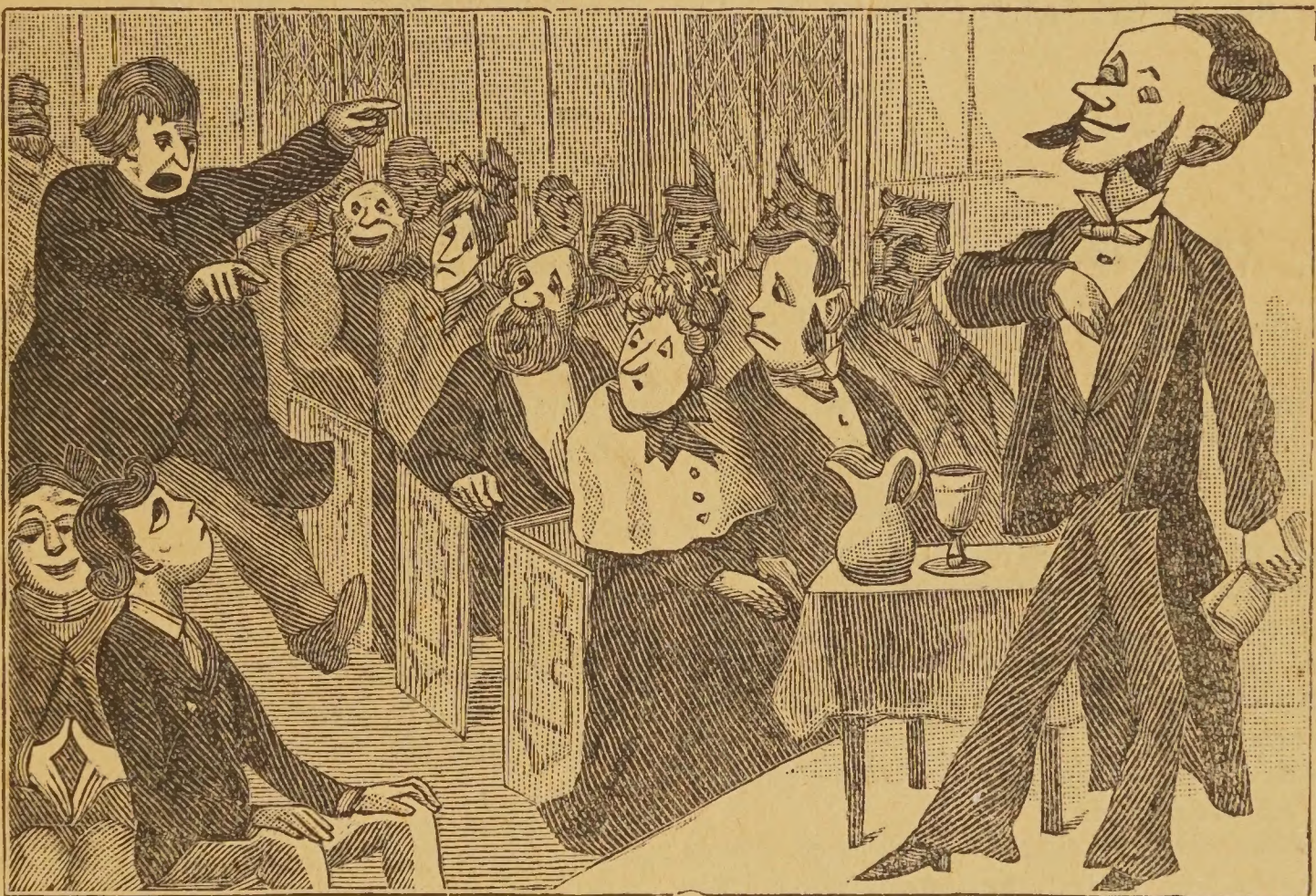
"You scoundrel! How dare you?"

It was Dr. Grout, who had just been informed by the doorkeeper that Professor Fossil was delivering the lecture in his place.

"Oh, you are here, are you?" said the professor, supposing, of course, that the new-comer was the doctor's twin brother.

"Yes, I am here," thundered the clergyman. "Get down from that platform and leave this church."

"I have been expecting you," said the professor in low, measured tones, "and am prepared for you. Sexton, do your duty."



AT THAT MOMENT AN ELDERLY MAN, IN A WHITE HEAT OF RAGE, RUSHED INTO THE CHURCH, HOWLING: "YOU SCOUNDREL! HOW DARE YOU?"

myself, but to the cultured few who are able to appreciate my lecture and myself.

"And I may say that in my long experience as a lecturer—for in former years I spoke in every large city in this country—I never addressed a more intelligent-looking audience than that which I now see before me.

"When I gaze about me, I am proud that Fossil Hall—an institution of learning which is acknowledged to be second to none in the country, although the rates for tuition are extremely low—is located in Hocusville, and that I am a Hocusvillian myself."

The old man went on in this way for several minutes, feeding the audience taffy and advertising his school.

When he had worked himself into a good humor, it struck him that it would be a good scheme to begin his lecture.

So he cleared his throat and "sailed in."

"Ladies and gentlemen," he began, "few subjects appeal to both the thoughtful and the imaginative mind

Then the sexton, a big, muscular fellow, with no more sense than the law allows, seized the reverend doctor, who by this time had reached the pulpit stairs, and began running him up the aisle in the direction of the door in the most undignified fashion.

Dr. Grout was the maddest man in that immediate vicinity.

He had had a hard evening of it, and he did not propose to stand much more.

He had managed to break open the trap-door and escape, and had made a bee-line for the church.

"Unhand me, you villain!" he shouted, trying to free himself from the sexton's clutches. "Is there no one here who will protect his pastor?"

Several of the deacons arose, but Professor Fossil called out:

"Do not be deceived, gentlemen. That man is not Dr. Grout, but an impostor who, taking advantage of an extraordinary resemblance he bears to your pastor, is endeavoring to impose upon you."



"I am not Dr. Grout, eh?" shouted the clergyman. "I'll show you whether I——"

At this moment he was ejected from the church by the sexton, who imagined that he was doing a big thing; and who ran the clergyman over to the village "lock-up" and had him put in durance vile.

Then Professor Fossil went on with his lecture, and succeeded in putting five-sixths of his audience asleep.

After the discourse he applied to one of the trustees for his fifty dollars, but was informed that no provision had been made for his payment, and that he would not get a cent.

He went home in a rage; which was not lessened when he learned, the next morning, that Dr. Grout intended to sue him for fifty thousand dollars damages.

The doctor had managed to prove his identity and secure his release at about midnight.

Of course it was plain enough that the whole thing was a trick.

Percival Grout received a sound thrashing, but Bolivar managed to escape scot-free, Professor Fossil refusing to believe that he had had anything to do with the trick.

### CHAPTER III.

#### A RECEPTION AT FOSSIL HALL.

For some time after the painful affair of the lecture Professor Fossil felt very sore.

And no wonder.

The best feelings of his nature had been rudely and ruthlessly stamped upon, he had been held up to ridicule before his fellow-citizens and his pupils.

And worse than all, Dr. Grout persisted in professing to believe that he—Professor Fossil—had taken an active part in the conspiracy, and was about to bring suit for heavy damages.

Who can blame the aged professor for being enraged and thirsting for vengeance?

The forged letter, which might have served as a clew to the identity of the plotter, had mysteriously disappeared.

Perhaps Bolivar could have told what had become of it.

But he didn't.

Percival Grout, as we have said, was thrashed, and so was Henderson Gawkey, on general principles.

A faint suspicion of Bolivar stole into the old professor's mind once or twice, but he instantly dismissed it as utterly preposterous and absurd.

Bolivar was very "solid" with him, and if he had had the evidence of his own eyes to the contrary, Professor Fossil would have insisted that the youth was innocent.

As we have seen, when the professor got an idea into his head, it was pretty hard to dislodge it without the use of instruments.

And Bolivar behaved so remarkably well after the evening of the lecture, made such progress in his studies, and indulged in so many enthusiastically complimentary remarks about the discourse, that the aged pedagogue could not believe him guilty of any complicity in the daring plot of which he had been a victim.

Yes, Bolivar behaved well for several days; but the

strain finally became too great, and he decided that it was about time for a new racket.

It did not take him long to plan one, and of course his pal was "in it."

One evening, while Professor Fossil was seated in his private office, there was a timid knock upon the door.

"Come in," shouted the old man.

Bolivar entered.

"May I have a few words conversation with you, Professor Fossil?" he asked in a low, sweet voice, and with an expression of countenance similar to that used by Sanford and Merton in their celebrated interview with the long-suffering Mr. Barlow.

"Why, certainly, Bolivar, my lad," replied the old man, with a soul-stirring smile. "Be seated."

"Thank you, sir. Professor, I know that you are always anxious to do all you can to make your pupils happy."

"Assuredly I am, Bolivar."

"Yes, sir. Professor, may I make a suggestion?"

"Certainly. Proceed, my lad."

"Couldn't we have an entertainment?"

"An entertainment?"

"Yes, sir; in the large hall."

"Ahem!" hesitated the old man. "I scarcely know how to reply."

"It would cost next to nothing," said Bolivar, knowing what his instructor was thinking of, "and might be of great benefit to the boys."

"Well, Bolivar, I shall consider the matter."

"You could make a few remarks that would be of the greatest service to us children," went on the irrepressible Bolivar.

"Undoubtedly I could."

"Some of the boys could recite, others could sing, and I could play the piano."

"You, Bolivar?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you play?"

"Oh, yes, professor."

"But we have no piano."

"That could be easily arranged, sir."

"How?"

"You could have one sent from New York on trial. If you didn't like it you could send it back, and it wouldn't cost a cent. There are a number of manufacturers in New York who would be glad to send an instrument in that way."

"That may be so," mused the professor.

"It is so, sir," returned Bolivar. "A friend of my papa's is a well-known piano manufacturer, and I know he would send one gladly if I asked him."

This was true, but Bolivar neglected to state what kind of a piano it was.

"If you will leave all that to me, professor," went on the audacious youth, "I think I can manage it for you."

"I will consider the matter, Bolivar."

"I know they would think it a high honor to send an instrument to an institution so celebrated as Fossil Hall."

"Naturally, Bolivar. Well, as I said before, I will give the matter due consideration and let you know."

"Thank you, sir."

"You may go, Bolivar."

"Yes, sir."

And Bolivar ambled out, his large, expressive eyes fixed upon the ceiling.

"That does not seem half a bad idea," soliloquized



the professor. "It will please the boys and will cost nothing. I am inclined to think that I shall grant the request."

He did so.

The next day he informed Bolivar that the entertainment could be given, and the following Friday evening was fixed for the momentous event.

For the next few days Bolivar and his pal and the other fellows who were in the racket, had plenty to do to occupy their leisure moments.

When Henderson Gawkley heard about the affair, he blubbered out:

"So you're going to have a piano?"

"Certainly we are," said Bolivar.

"And you're going to play?"

"Yes."

"Humph!" and an expressive sneer illumined Gawkley's face. "Well, you ought to hear me play. What I can't do on a piano isn't worth doing."

Bolivar had often heard him boast of his great abilities as a pianist, and was leading him on, with a purpose in view which will appear later.

"I suppose you do play well," he said. "Why don't you take part in the entertainment?"

"I would," snorted Gawkley, "but the prof. wouldn't let me."

"I'm sure he'd be glad to have you do it," said Bolivar. "If you like I'll speak to him about it."

"Will you, really?" asked the youth in great surprise. "Certainly."

"Well, if you ask him it'll be all right. Everything you say goes with him."

"Of course I'll ask him," said Bolivar pleasantly.

And he did.

At first Professor Fossil objected on general principles, but he finally yielded to Bolivar's importunities, saying:

"Very well, it shall be as you wish, Bolivar; but as this affair is under my direction, and is held within the classic walls of Fossil Hall, it would embarrass me exceedingly to have any fiasco occur."

"Oh, I think that Henderson will be all right. You are very kind, professor. Good-afternoon, sir."

And Bolivar backed out.

If all his plans succeeded, the entertainment—or "reception," as the professor chose to call it—would be a "dandy" affair.

The day before the reception Bolivar came to Professor Fossil with a sheet of manuscript.

"Professor," he said, in his humble, shrinking way, "here is a little song that my friend and I have written. Would you be willing to have it sung at the reception by the entire school?"

"Ahem! Let me see the song," said the old man with a benignant smile.

Bolivar handed him the manuscript.

The song was as follows:

"All hail to Fossil Hall,  
The topmost school of all,  
And to its chief.  
Long may they both survive.  
For while they stay alive  
All Hocusville must thrive.  
Such our belief."

"Ahem!" commented the gratified professor, looking up. "Quite a creditable composition for one so young."

"Oh, thank you, sir!" gushed Bolivar, casting his eyes down modestly.

"Highly complimentary in its references to me and my humble efforts," continued the old man.

"Oh, I'm sure it does not say half enough," asserted Bolivar.

"Ahem! Perhaps not; that, however, is not for me to say. The reference to the intimate connection between the prosperity of Hocusville and the existence of Fossil Hall is pertinent and well timed."

"Yes, sir."

"I would, however, suggest that the word 'are' be substituted for 'stay' in the fifth line."

"Thank you, sir. I shall make the alteration. But please read the next verse, Professor Fossil."

"Certainly, Bolivar."

This is what the professor read:

"We do not feel put out  
When men like Dr. Grout  
Slander and sneer.  
For this we're daily taught,  
That if their brains were sought,  
They would be proven naught.  
That point is clear."

"He, he, he!" giggled the old man. "Very good, Bolivar, but I scarcely know whether it would be politic to introduce that reference to Dr. Grout."

"Why not, professor?" asked Bolivar. "All your pupils feel indignant at the insulting manner in which you have been treated by the doctor."

"Naturally."

"They would be glad to show their resentment by singing this song."

"Oh, very well; let the verse go as it is. But we shall need a tune for it, Bolivar."

"It can be sung to the tune 'America,' 'My Country 'Tis of Thee,' professor."

"So it can. Very good, Bolivar. If you will see that copies are made of it, we will open the exercises by singing it."

"Thank you, professor."

"Have you anything more to say, Bolivar?"

"No, sir."

"Then you may go; I am very busy on the seventeenth chapter of my history."

"Yes, sir. Excuse me for interrupting you, professor."

And the youth slid out.

He and his pal were kept pretty busy the rest of the day.

On Friday morning the piano arrived, and was placed upon the platform.

The professor put on as many "lugs" as if he had been squandering large wealth for the instrument, instead of getting it for nothing.

"Remember, young gentlemen," he said, strutting about the platform, "that when your welfare is at stake Frothingham Fossil spares no pains or expense. Only show a proper appreciation of this fact and I shall feel amply repaid for all I have done."

Then he called up Henderson Gawkley and thrashed him because he happened to drop a book on the floor; after which the exercises proceeded.

The Reverend Dr. Thunderby Grout received a note that afternoon that surprised him not a little.



We give it verbatim:

"My Dear Dr. Grout—May one who has ever been a sincere admirer of your great talents, although he may at times have seemed unappreciative, beg the pleasure of your company at a reception to be given at Fossil Hall at 8 o'clock this evening? Your attendance would be esteemed a high honor by

"Your sincere friend,

"FROTHINGHAM FOSSIL, A. M."

Dr. Grout was amazed when he read this communication.

"At last," he muttered, "I have made this man, Frothingham Fossil, feel my power. He fears the result of my suit for fifty thousand dollars damages, and takes this method of conciliating me. Well, as he seems willing to meet me half way, and as it is not likely that I could collect even fifty cents if the suit were decided in my favor, I will accept his advances. I will attend this reception."

It is, probably, needless for us to state that Bolivar, and not Professor Fossil, was the author of the above note.

But the doctor did not suspect this.

At eight o'clock that evening all the boys were in their places, and Professor Fossil was on the platform, his face illumined by a six-by-nine smile.

"We will commence the exercises by singing the 'Ode to Fossil Hall,' composed by your fellow-pupil, Master Bolivar S. Bones," he said.

Just at this moment the door opened and Dr. Grout entered, his face wearing a triumphant smile.

"Good-evening, Professor Fossil. It affords me sincere pleasure to be with you and your pupils on this momentous occasion."

And he stepped upon the platform and beamed upon the boys.

Professor Fossil was, to put it slangy, "knocked silly."

At first he stood as if petrified; then he bowed stiffly.

The doctor did not know what to make of his reception; he glared back at the professor and returned his bow with another of the same kind.

He was hardly settled in his seat when one of the boys, who was seated at the piano, struck up the prelude to the "Ode."

The boys started in on the first verse with great gusto. Professor Fossil was in a quandary.

If he allowed his pupils to sing the second verse there would be a grand row; if he ordered them not to sing it he would be placed in a ridiculous position in their eyes.

He ground his teeth and mentally called himself all sorts of names for having yielded to the persuasions of the artless Bolivar; but there seemed to be no help for it now, and he held his peace.

Dr. Grout listened to the first verse with pleased attention.

Perhaps he did not fully agree with the sentiments expressed therein, but he was determined to make himself as agreeable as possible, so he twisted his face into a smile.

But the expression of his countenance underwent a startling change when the boys began the second verse.

Was he mad?

Oh, no, he was delighted in the extreme.

Before the verse was finished he leaped to his feet, shouting:

"This is infamous!"

Professor Fossil could not think of an appropriate reply, so he kept quiet.

When the boys had finished the verse a death-like silence reigned.

It did not reign long, however.

"Frothingham Fossil," shrieked the reverend doctor, "I would not have believed that you were so entirely lost to all sense of propriety and decency."

"Silence, Thunderby Grout!" began Professor Fossil, reddening with anger.

"Silence yourself," howled the doctor, forgetting his dignity. "A nice man you are to have all these innocent children entrusted to your charge."

Here Bolivar sobbed aloud, while his pal buried his face in his handkerchief and pretended to be overcome with emotion.

"Grout," yelled the professor, "I have endured much from you; but have a care, you may go too far."

"You insolent scoundrel!" returned the doctor, "dare you threaten me?"

"Yes, I dare; and if you utter another word in that tone I will have you ejected from the building."

"You unscrupulous villain——"

"Enough!" howled Professor Fossil. "Phelim, put that man out."

This was pie for Phelim; he had reasons of his own for not liking Dr. Grout.

With a pleased smile he cantered up to the platform.

"Don't you dare lay a finger on me, you ruffian!" bawled the doctor, assuming an attitude of defence.

But Phelim was not afraid of him, and in about thirty seconds had succeeded in "bouncing" him in a very neat and expeditious manner.

"You will hear from me again, Fossil," screamed the doctor as he was deposited outside the door.

But Professor Fossil vouchsafed no reply.

Turning to his pupils, he said:

"Young gentlemen, no one can regret this occurrence more than I."

"Perhaps Dr. Grout does, sir," suggested Bolivar with a meek, humble air.

"He! he! he!" snickered the old man. "That is not bad, Bolivar."

"Thank you, sir."

"We will now proceed with the exercises as if nothing had happened. I have a few remarks to make to you on 'How to Succeed in Life.'"

And the professor cleared his throat and "sailed in."

His address, which was as dry as a thirsty tramp, lasted about half an hour.

Then he said:

"We are now to be favored with a piano solo by Master Bolivar S. Bones."

Bolivar arose and ambled up to the piano, a pleasant smile on his face.

Now he knew nothing about piano-playing, but he was all ready to "tackle" this job.

The old professor did not know it, but this was a mechanical piano.

You could play it like any other piano if you wanted to, but if you didn't all you had to do was to touch a small stop near the keyboard, and it would "fire away" all by itself, playing a selection of popular airs.

Bolivar knew this, and so did his pal and a few chosen spirits, but the professor didn't.

"I shall have great pleasure in playing that justly popular composition entitled 'The Maiden's Prayer,'" announced Bolivar.



Then he seated himself and quietly pulled out the stop.

The piano started in on "The Maiden's Prayer," Bolivar keeping his hands going so that he was apparently doing all the work, while in reality he was not playing a note.

He was rewarded with a storm of applause when he had finished, and retired to his seat with an air of shrinking modesty.

One of the boys sang a song, another gave a recitation, and then the professor announced in a fifty-degrees-below-zero tone:

"Master Henderson Gawkley having solicited permission to play a solo upon the piano, I have accorded it. What is your selection, Gawkley?"

" 'Home, Sweet Home,' with variations," replied the youth.

"Well, come up and play it."

Gawkley advanced with a roll of music and a self-satisfied smirk.

"I can't," replied Gawkley, jumping up, while Bolivar hastily pushed in the stop.

"You can't?" thundered the old man.

"No, sir."

"Why can't you?"

"I think the piano is bewitched, sir; it won't play 'Home, Sweet Home.' "

"Gawkley," hissed the old man, "there is a point where patience ceases to be a virtue. Sit down and play 'Home, Sweet Home.' "

Gawkley reseated himself.

Out came the stop, and again the strain of the waltz filled the hall.

The professor jumped up and seized the youth by the collar, while Bolivar shoved in the stop.

Well, poor Gawkley got another "trouncing," and was sent to his room.

Then the reception went on.

Was there any more fun?

There just was.



THE PIANO STARTED IN ON "THE MAIDEN'S PRAYER," BOLIVAR KEEPING HIS HANDS GOING SO THAT HE WAS APPARENTLY DOING ALL THE WORK, BUT HE WAS NOT PLAYING A NOTE.

He expected to create a sensation.

And he did!

Bolivar pranced up behind him, saying:

"I have promised to turn over the leaves of the music for Henderson, professor."

"Very well, Bolivar," returned the old man graciously. Gawkley sat down.

When he was all ready to begin, Bolivar unostentatiously pulled out the stop, and the piano commenced to play a lively waltz.

"Home, Sweet Home," was literally "not in it."

It was wound up to play the waltz, and it was going to play it or burst.

Gawkley was paralyzed.

The professor was mad.

"Why do you not play what you said you were going to?" he demanded.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE END OF THE RECEPTION.

As we remarked at the close of our last chapter, all the fun of the reception was not at an end when Henderson Gawkley was banished from the hall on account of his failure to render a piano solo satisfactory to Professor Fossil.

The professor's feathers were a good deal ruffled, so to speak, when the little episode which we have chronicled was over, but he tried to conceal his mortification and anger to some extent.

"Young gentlemen," he said, "we will now proceed with the programme, and I sincerely trust that no further unfortunate interruptions will occur. We are now to listen to an original poem, recited by Master Bolivar Bones."



Then Bolivar meandered up to the platform with a childlike and bland expression of countenance, and delivered himself of the following:

"Napeleon, and Washington, and Wellington and Grant, And all the greatest authors of the greatest books extant, And all the great philosophers and poets of the age Whose names are writ indelibly on Fame's illustrious page.

Just take all I have spoken of and roll them into one, The result will scarcely equal fair Hocusville's great son.

You understand the man I mean, he's known unto you all:

'Tis the great Professor Fossil of the famous Fossil Hall."

Having recited this poem with an appearance of deep feeling, Bolivar ambled back to his seat amid a perfect whirlwind of applause.

When these alleged manifestations of enthusiasm had subsided Professor Fossil observed, with a gratified smirk:

"An extremely creditable composition for one so young. Highly eulogistic of myself—indeed, too much so, I fear, although the same opinions have been expressed by many others."

At this moment the door was suddenly opened and Phelim stuck his head in.

"Will I bring the t'ings in here, perfissor?"

"What things?" demanded the old professor, somewhat irritated by the interruption.

"Why, sorr, the sandwiches an' the ice-crame."

"Sandwiches and ice-cream? What do you mean?"

"Sure there's t'ree freezers o' crame and foor big bashkets o' sandwiches from the hotel, an' this kem wid 'em."

And he handed Professor Fossil a note.

The old man tore it open with clouded brow.

But as he perused its contents his face lighted up.

"Ahem!" he remarked. "Such little incidents as this tend to restore one's faltering faith in the innate nobility of human nature. Young gentlemen, you shall hear the contents of this little note."

And he read the following:

"Hocusville Hotel, — — —th, 18—.

"Will Professor Frothingham Fossil kindly accept the accompanying slight collation from his friend and admirer, Boniface Hashton, who sends it with his sincere regards, and an earnest hope that it may be in time, and that it will be thoroughly enjoyed by the pupils of America's greatest educational institution, Fossil Hall."

The professor was surprised, for Mr. Boniface Hashton, the landlord of the village hotel, was only a "bowing acquaintance."

However, he was "tickled half to death," and never suspected for a moment that the note had been written, not by Mr. Hashton, but by Bolivar, who had bribed Phelim to deliver it.

"Such, young gentlemen," went on the professor, "is the esteem in which your preceptor is universally held. Let this be a lesson to you that——"

Just then Phelim broke in with:

"Perfissor!"

Well, well," returned the old man impatiently, "what is it?"

"It's the sandwiches an' ice-crame, sorr. What'll I do wid 'em?"

"What shall you do with them?" snorted Professor Fossil. "That is one of the most idiotic questions I ever heard in my life. What do you suppose I want you to do with them? Take them into the supper-room, and when all preparations are made for the collation, come and notify me. You may go."

"Yes, perfissor," returned Phelim, glad enough to get out, for all the time the old man was talking Bolivar was making a series of horrible faces at him, with the deliberate intention of provoking him to laughter.

Then the professor began a speech to the boys on the subject of the ultimate triumph of virtue under all circumstances (using his own career as an illustration, of course), and might have been talking to this day if Phelim had not re-entered and announced that all was in readiness for the supper.

We need not state that it did not take the boys very long to get down to the supper-room, where the sandwiches that Mr. Hashton had sent, and a quantity of coffee, prepared by the professor's cook, were consumed in short order.

Then came the ice-cream, which was voted a grand success, and which was made to disappear with a rapidity that amazed the professor.

The old man liked to see the boys enjoy themselves when it didn't cost him anything, and he was much pleased at the enthusiasm they manifested.

"That is right, boys," he said, "the body as well as the mind must be fed. Good, wholesome food, and plenty of it, is conducive to long life; and there is nothing that I more strongly deprecate——"

At this juncture he was again interrupted by the irrepressible and omnipresent Phelim, who entered, shouting:

"Perfissor Fossil?"

"Would it not be possible for you to select any other time to transact whatever business you may have with me?" inquired the professor, pettishly. "What do you want?"

"There's some wan here to see ye," answered Phelim.

"To see me?"

"Yes, sorr."

"Who is it?"

"Misther Hashton. He's jist outside here."

"Indeed?" smiled Professor Fossil. "Why did you not say so before? Show him in without further delay."

"Sure, he won't come in, sorr."

"Won't come in? Oh, nonsense!"

"No, sorr; he says he's in a hurry, an' he wants to know if ye'll pay him his bill."

"Bill!" piped the old man. "What bill? I do not owe Mr. Hashton anything."

At this Hashton, who had been listening to every word outside, rushed in.

He was a large, stout man, of an impetuous disposition, and he appeared considerably agitated as he asked:

"See here, Fossil, what sort of a bluff is this?"

"I do not understand you, sir," returned the astonished professor.

"You don't eh? Well, you do. Aren't your boys just finishing off the sandwiches and ice-cream I sent round?"

"They are."



"Just so. Well, I want my money."

"What money?"

"What money?" snorted the hotel-keeper. "See here, Fossil, keep this up just a little longer and you'll get me mad."

He was already pretty mad, and so was the professor, for that matter.

But the old man tried to maintain his well-known dignity.

"Sir," he said in low, measured accents, "I shall not allow your coarse, ungrammatical utterances to irritate me in the least; the low brutality of which they give evidence makes them unworthy of my attention. But if you have one spark of manhood left in you—which, I am pained to say, I doubt—you will not forget that you are in the presence of innocent children."

"Innocent nothing!" snorted Hashton. "Any one of those pupils of yours is flip enough for a dozen like you."

Boniface Hashton!"

"That's my name, and I'm not ashamed of it. Are you going to pay me my twenty-four dollars or not?"

"Twenty-four dollars!" shrieked Professor Fossil, his good eye bulging out, while the glass one seemed to recede in horror. "When did I incur any such debt to you?"

"When did you—— Say, keep on, and after a few hours I may possibly lose my patience and wipe you off the globe. These boys have eaten my sandwiches."

"Yes," interrupted the professor, who couldn't hold in any longer; "and I regret that in a moment of thoughtlessness I permitted them to do so, for they have a night of suffering ahead of them."

"They have consumed my ice-cream——"

"Consumed is good," yelled the professor. "Well, if their constitutions are undermined, I suppose that I, in my thoughtless good nature, shall be partially responsible. But enough of this. Leave this room."

"Nixey."

"What?"

"I don't go till I get my money."

"What money?"

"The money for this collation."

"Did I send for your measley collation?"

"You did."

"What?"

"You did."

"I sent for it?"

"Didn't you send me a letter this morning, requesting me to deliver a quantity of the best quality of chicken sandwiches and ice-cream of various flavors at this place, because you had decided to give your pupils a relief from the monotony of their daily life?"

"I did not."

"You didn't?"

"No, I did not."

"You lie!"

"Boniface Hashton," hissed the professor through his clinched teeth, "I am a gentleman!"

"You are well disguised," interrupted Mr. Hashton, with a sardonic grin.

"I am a gentleman," continued the old man, "and as such I must treat your assertion with the scorn it deserves. I do not expect to wither you with my contempt——"

"You won't!"

"No, you are past that. No, I only desire to state in the calmest manner that you are a scoundrel to whom

an ignominious death on the gallows would be a high compliment."

"Whack!"

"Bang!"

"Biff!"

These are a few of the sounds that followed Professor Fossil's scathing remarks.

It was evident from the manner in which the hotel-keeper had jumped upon the learned professor, that he was somewhat annoyed.

It was also evident from the way in which Professor Fossil responded to his visitor's civilities, that his feelings were slightly hurt.

In fact, neither of the old men seemed perfectly at his ease.

The little "mill" pleased the boys even more than the ice-cream had.

From their point of view, if not from the professor's, the reception was a great, big success.

But their enjoyment of the fight was cut short by the sudden entrance of no less a personage than the Reverend Dr. Grout.

Professor Fossil picked himself up, and Mr. Hashton gathered himself together.

The hotel-keeper was a prominent member of Dr. Grout's church, and it "broke him all up" to be found engaged in an energetic game of fistcuffs by his pastor.

Both he and the professor looked decidedly foolish.

As for the boys, anticipating still more fun, they drew on long faces, and kept so quiet that you could have heard a dew drop.

Mr. Hashton was the first to break the silence.

"D-Dr. Grout," he began, "it wasn't my fault. I——"

"You need not assure me of that," interposed the clergyman, grasping his parishioner's hand.

"Thank you. Professor Fos——"

"Enough, Mr. Hashton. It would have been impossible for me to be a member of this community so many years and not form a clear idea of that man's character."

"Thunderby Grout——" began the old professor.

"Silence!" roared the doctor.

Just here Bolivar thought it well to get in a little fine work.

"Oh," he wailed, "Professor Fossil has been insulted! Would that I were a man, that I might lay his traducer senseless at my feet!"

"Me, too," added his pal, with a sob that sounded like a truck-horse drawing his hoof out of a foot of mire.

Dr. Grout turned to the two youths.

"Calm yourselves, my lads," he said. "You, too, are under the baleful spell of this man, Fossil, but when you learn to know him as he really is you will change your opinion of him."

"Oh, that's all right," interrupted Hashton, who was rather "flyer" than either the doctor or the professor. "Don't you see, Dr. Grout, that these boys are only guying you?"

"It is false!" shrieked Bolivar.

"Oh, that I should have lived to see this day!" added his pal in hysterical accents.

"Well, let us have an end of all this," interrupted Dr. Grout, impatiently.

"That's what I say," supplemented Mr. Hashton, as he pinned up a big rip in the back of his coat.

"We will bring the affair to an end, and that in short order," roared the professor. "If you two scoundrels do not leave this room inside of one minute I'll throw you both out of the window."



"A new case against you!" shouted the clergyman. "Defamation of character. I, Thunderby Grout, D. D., a scoundrel, eh? I will make you pay fifty thousand dollars additional for that expression, Frothingham Fossil."

"Grout——"

"Enough of this. Constable, do your duty."

At this the village constable, who had been stationed outside the door all the time awaiting this signal, pranced in.

He had not made an arrest in a year, and he felt as big as a hotel clerk in convention week.

Waltzing up to the professor, he clapped his hand on his shoulder, announcing with a theatrical gesture:

"Frothingham Fossil, A. M., you are my prisoner."

The professor was paralyzed.

"Your—your prisoner?" he gasped.

"Yes, my prisoner."

"On what charge?"

"Assault and battery."

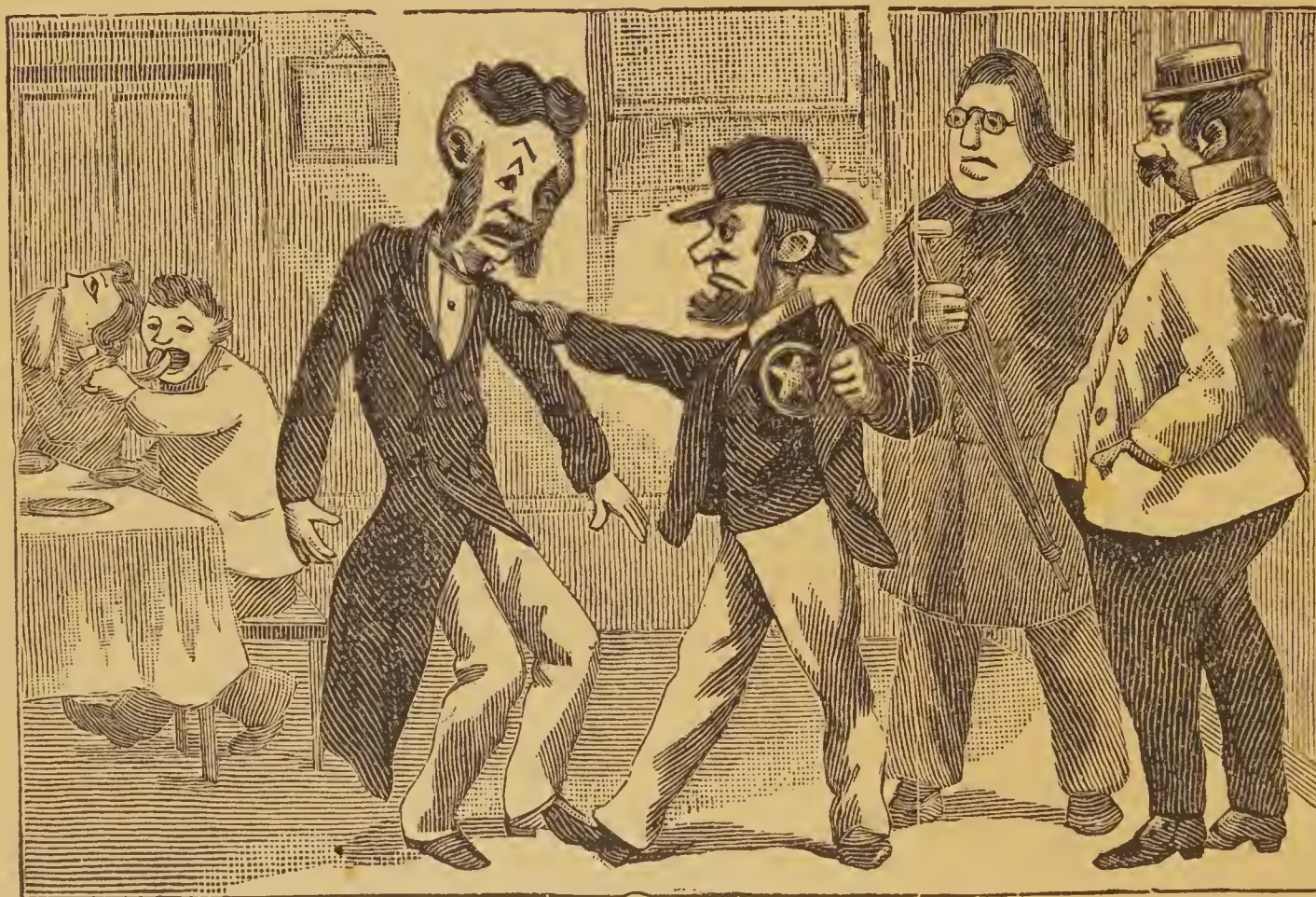
"Yes, constable, do your duty," added Professor Fossil; "but remember that for this act your name will be handed down to future ages with those of Nero, Appius Claudius and Macchivelli."

The constable, who had probably never heard of the gentlemen named, smiled feebly, as he began walking the old man toward the door.

"Yes, that is right," howled the professor. "Gloat over my sufferings. Boys, adieu! You may never see your martyr instructor again; but sometimes think of him as one whose sole thought was for your welfare, and who, though cut off in his bloom, had already succeeded in carving his name in ineffaceable letters in the niche of fame."

Dr. Grout laughed sarcastically as the professor was led out, while Bolivar burst into an alleged flood of tears, and declared that he had no longer any desire to live.

His pal also stated that it was his intention to go into a decline as soon as possible.



"RESISTANCE IS USELESS," ADDED THE CONSTABLE, WHO WAS A LITTLE FELLOW, AND WAS SHAKING IN HIS SHOES. "I AM A DESPERATE MAN, AND I AM ARMED TO THE TEETH."

"Assault and battery?"

"Yes," interrupted Dr. Grout, "assault and battery, and the charge is preferred by me."

"Resistance is useless," added the constable, who was a little fellow, and was shaking in his shoes for fear that Professor Fossil would knock him over. "I am a desperate man, and I am armed to the teeth."

But the professor did not resist.

"I will go with you," he said, with the air of an old-time martyr about to be led to the stake; "but I call all present to witness that this is an outrage scarcely paralleled in the annals of civilization. Oh, there shall be a heavy reckoning for this."

And the old man glared about him with his real eye, while the glass one seemed to gleam in sympathetic defiance.

"More threats," said the doctor. "It will be an excellent thing for this community when this man, Fossil, is put under lock and key. But enough of this! Constable, do your duty!"

And the two boys kept this up until the old professor was well out of hearing.

Then they changed their tune.

Didn't that school have a grand laugh?

Rather.

We are glad to be able to state that there were a few sober, serious-minded lads in the school who were shocked at the state of affairs, but the grand majority thought it the best racket of the season.

"B'ys," said Phelim, "yez are howly terrors, an' it's mesilf is afraid to kape me place here for fear yez'll have me loife."

"That's all right, Phelim," said Bolivar; "don't we always treat you well?"

"We couldn't afford to kill you," added his pal; "you're too useful to us. We may maim you for life some day when we are short of innocent, boyish amusement, but your life shall be spared so long as you attend strictly to duty."

"Sure, the perfissor'll maim me fer loife whin he



comes back an' foinds out that I helped ye in that trick."

"Oh, he won't find out, and he'll warm up Gawkley for the whole business," said Bolivar.

"Well, he'll warm you an' yer pal up too, or my name is not Phelim Finnegan."

"Oh, no, Phelim."

"Oh, yis."

"You wait and see."

"Won't he foind out that 'twas you ordhered the crame an' t'ings?"

"No, because I was disguised when I did it."

"Well, he'll foind out about that thrick pianny, an' thin he's sure to tumble."

"Ne, he won't. I told the man to come for the piano the first thing to-morrow morning, and the chances are that it'll be out of the way before the professor gets back."

It was.

In fact, it all turned out just as Bolivar had predicted.

The professor was released on bail in the morning; and then he began what he called an "investigation."

The evidence against Bolivar was clear enough, but the old man wouldn't see it.

He gave Henderson Gawkley a thrashing, and condemned him to four more days' imprisonment, and there the matter ended.

A few days later mutual friends induced Dr. Grout to withdraw his complaint against the professor, and the two old men were reconciled after a fashion.

For an entire week peace and quiet reigned at Fossil Hall.

Everything went like clock-work, and the professor began to grow fat.

But the enlargement of his adipose tissue was suddenly checked, and the checker thereof was no less a person than the sweet-faced, violet-eyed Bolivar.

## CHAPTER V.

### PROFESSOR FOSSIL BECOMES A STOIC.

Professor Fossil, as it gave us great pleasure to state at the close of our last tone-picture, was beginning to increase in weight.

It was not because he ate any more, it was simply for the reason that Bolivar and his pal had "let up" on him for a few days.

A fresh, healthy color came into his aged cheek, even his glass eye glistened with new vigor; and, when not engaged in his important work of teaching the young idea how to shoot, he frolicked about the house warbling gayly, "Patsy Doolan's Wake," "They're After Me," and other justly popular airs.

Yes, the old prof. had a good time for a while, and so did Henderson Gawkley.

For nearly a week that hitherto unfortunate youth was not thrashed, and he, too, began to feel good.

As for Bolivar, he was—outwardly—just the same as ever. He looked almost too good to live, was always at the top end of the class, and in other respects strengthened the good opinion with which he was regarded by his venerable instructor.

And his pal was nearly as virtuous, so far as surface

indications went. His voice was one of the loudest and clearest when the morning hymn was sung, his lessons were always thoroughly learned, his conduct was irreproachable.

In short, everything at Fossil Hall was lovely until Bolivar became restless once more and began to thirst for amusement.

"We are taught that pride cometh before a fall," he remarked to his pal one morning before school, "and I guess it's about so."

"Wherefore this thusness?" inquired the youth addressed, as he artistically swiped a cigarette from our hero's pocket.

"Well," replied Bolivar, recovering the cigarette and lighting it with a match which he carelessly removed from his pal's pocket, "the prof. is becoming too haughty of late. It is time that the idea that he is but dust was gently but firmly conveyed to his aged mind."

"Don't know but you're right," mused his pal.

"Certainly I am!" responded Bolivar. "When was I wrong? The old man goes around warbling like a bird flitting from bough to bough and vice-versa, and I think it is now necessary to sling a large pailful of cold water on his animal spirits. He will thank me for it some day."

"Oh, yes," said his pal, "he will undoubtedly in time present you with an elegantly engrossed set of resolutions, testifying that to you more than to any other human being he attributes the fact that his latter days have been full of gloom and wretchedness."

"Just so, pal," replied Bolivar, cheerfully.

"Well, to make a long story short, you have a scheme."

"I have."

"What is it?"

"Can I trust you?"

"I swear——"

"Enough! You shall know all, and more."

And he unfolded the particulars of a scheme that ought to have made his pal's blood run cold.

But it didn't.

The vital fluid coursed through the youth's veins in just the same old way and at precisely its usual temperature, and he agreed to assist to the best of his ability in the nefarious plot.

It seems too bad to be true, but it is true, for all that.

We will give the reader an idea of what the scheme was.

Professor Fossil had for a long time had a great desire to become a member of the Ancient Order of Stoics.

The Simon-pure Stoics were, as the reader is probably aware, a people who prided themselves upon being able to stand anything, from a bath of melted lead to a refined negro minstrel show, without kicking.

Exactly what the modern Stoics prided themselves upon Professor Fossil did not know, but he was particularly anxious to find out.

Several eminent men that he knew and respected highly, belonged to the Ancient Order of Stoics, and he yearned with a large 7x10 yearning to be one of them.

So that Bolivar decided that it was his duty, as one deeply interested in the old man's welfare, to gratify this harmless ambition.

There were a chosen few at Fossil Hall who were always ready for any sort of racket of the kind, and before the day was over Bolivar and his pal had interviewed them all and obtained their hearty co-operation in the scheme.

On the following Thursday the old professor received



the following letter, the contents of which excited the most pleasurable emotions in his bosom.

"Headquarters of the Daniel Webster Branch of the Ancient Order of Stoics.

"——— —th, 18—.

"Professor Frothingham Fossil:

"Dear Sir—It is the custom of each branch of the Ancient Order of Stoics to make a semi-annual choice of an honorary member, who is admitted without charge, and who is exempt from the payment of dues. Some distinguished man is usually chosen, and this year you have been unanimously nominated. If you will accept, send a reply to that effect by bearer and you will be installed to-morrow night. At eight o'clock precisely one of our brethren will be at the entrance to Fossil Hall with a carriage. Enter the vehicle without fear, and you will be conveyed at once to the mystic hall where the awful rites of initiation will be performed.

Awaiting your reply, I am,

"Yours in brotherly esteem,

"DANGER A. HEAD,

"King Pin Daniel Webster Branch A. O. of S."

The professor was as happy as if he had round a five-dollar note.

He was actually to become a Stoic, and without expense.

It seemed to him a great stroke of luck.

He sat right down and wrote an enthusiastic reply, which he delivered personally into the hands of the sad-eyed youth who was waiting at the door, and upon whom he also bestowed the gift of a quarter.

His reply read thusly:

"Hocusville, ——— —th, 18—.

"Danger A. Head, Esq.:

"Dear Sir—Your favor offering me an honorary membership in the Daniel Webster Branch of the Ancient Order of Stoics is just received, and I cheerfully accept. Your representative will find me in readiness to-morrow evening.

"Yours sincerely,

"FROTHINGHAM FOSSIL, A. M."

The professor thought that it was a big thing for him to become a Stoic; he also was of the opinion that he would be a large sized acquisition to the Daniel Webster Branch, of which neither he nor any one else had ever heard before.

He thought of nothing but his coming initiation all day.

He was very absent-minded, and it made no particular difference whether the boys knew their lessons or not—he scarcely heard a word they said.

He was rather nervous about the initiation, for he had heard that the Stoics' was very severe; but he was determined to go through it at any cost, and without showing the white feather.

The boys who were in the scheme were as anxious for evening to come as the professor was; for they, too, were anticipating an event long to be remembered.

Eight o'clock arrived right on time at 7:60 p. m., and, punctual to the minute, Professor Fossil strode out to

the road, where he found a close carriage awaiting him.

The driver's hat was pulled over his eyes, and his collar was turned up so that none of his features were visible.

"Enter, Frothingham Fossil," said a sepulchral voice inside the coupe. "I have been deputed to conduct you to the mystic headquarters of our sublime order."

Twisting his features into a smirk, the old professor was about to enter when he perceived that the inmate of the carriage was masked.

He started back, exclaiming:

"Who are you?"

"Ask not my name, Frothingham Fossil," was the reply, in the same monotonous tone.

"But——"

"Enough. If you fear the awful ordeal that is before you, it is not yet too late to turn back; but should you decide to do so, remember that you can never again hope to partake of the glorious benefits of the Ancient Order of Stoics!"

"I——"

"Aha! your cheek pales, you tremble! Driver, proceed; Frothingham Fossil desires to turn back."

"No, he doesn't either," the professor exclaimed hastily, as he scrambled into the carriage. "I am not trembling any more than you are."

"It is well. Driver, proceed. Make all haste to our dreadful rendezvous."

Off started the coupe at a break-neck pace.

The professor would have been glad enough to turn back, but he was determined not to show any signs of fear if he could help it.

"Ha, ha, ha!" he giggled somewhat hysterically; "I was amused, my dear sir, when you suggested that I was afraid. He, he, he!"

"It would not have been strange had you been so," responded the unknown. "It is quite evident from your flippant tone that you have little idea of the nature of our initiation."

This "staggered" the professor a little.

"Is it so very trying?" he asked, a perceptible tremor in his voice.

"Trying!" answered his companion. "That is a feeble, unmeaning word when applied to the initiation ceremonies of the Ancient Order of Stoics."

"Dear me!"

"Me, too. The initiation is bad enough, but the accidents are what annoy us the most."

"Accidents?"

"Why, certainly, sir; you do not suppose that an elaborate initiation like ours can be carried on year after year without occasional accidents, do you? Many of the mysterious disappearances which have from time to time been reported in this and other communities have been due to unfortunate catastrophes which unavoidably occurred during our initiation ceremonies."

"Good gracious!"

"Yes, sir. Why, only last week a blindfolded candidate accidentally fell into our molten-lead vault."

"Was he killed?" inquired the professor.

"We infer that he was," replied the unknown. "as he has not yet reappeared. Oh, yes, these things will happen."

"Y-y-yes, I suppose so."

"But, after all, the advantages acquired by a membership in our glorious order compensate for all."

"Ahem! What are the advantages?" asked Professor Fossil.



"What are they?" repeated the stranger, with indignant emphasis.

"Yes, what are they?"

"Is it nothing to say that you are one of the Ancient Order of Stoics?"

"Oh, yes; but is that all the advantage gained?" inquired the old man, to whom this did not seem quite as big a thing as it had a short time before.

"All? Why, what do you expect, Professor Fossil? The earth? Should you, while a member of the order, die in abject poverty, your brother Stoics will see that you have a respectable burial. Is that nothing to look forward to?"

It did not seem a very brilliant prospect to the professor, but he tried to feign enthusiasm in replying that it was, indeed.

"I should say it was," responded his companion heatedly. "Not for all the wealth of the Indies would I possess the nature of the man whose bosom would not glow with enthusiasm at the thought that he might some day die in poverty and misery and be buried by the Ancient Order of Stoics, and have a dirge sung at his grave—weather permitting—by an amateur male quartette without charge."

Professor Fossil's bosom did not glow with enthusiasm to any extent, but he refrained from saying so.

"You do not manifest the interest and enthusiasm that I expected," went on the unknown. "You must not let my brethren see that you lack interest, or they may become infuriated, and then the initiation will be just so much the harder for you."

"My dear sir," the professor said, "I assure you that you misunderstand me altogether."

"Well, I hope so."

"How much further is it?" asked the old man, after a short silence.

"We shall reach the spot in about five minutes. And now, Frothingham Fossil, it becomes my duty to blindfold you."

"To blindfold me?" gasped the old man.

"Certainly."

"Oh, what is the use of that?"

"It is our imperative rule."

And the stranger produced a handkerchief and bound it tightly over the unresisting professor's eyes.

By this time the old man would gladly have "backed out," but he did not dare.

In about five minutes the carriage stopped, and the unknown said:

"Frothingham Fossil, we have arrived at our journey's end. I will lead you into the hall."

He helped the old man dismount from the carriage.

Had not Professor Fossil been blindfolded, he would have known where he was in a moment, and the racket would have been at an end.

About three years before the time of which we are writing an adventurous speculator had built a big wooden barn in a spot in the outskirts of Hocusville, had divided it into six-by-nine cells, and dubbed it "The Buckingham." He expected to make a colossal fortune in running it as a summer hotel; but he "slipped up." The opposition was too strong, and after losing money for two seasons he gave up in disgust; and ever since that time the old house had been empty.

The boys had had no trouble in gaining an entrance to it, and they had arranged everything in great shape for the "initiation."

As Professor Fossil, guided by his mysterious com-

panion, entered the building, a harsh voice demanded:

"Who comes?"

"It is I," replied the unknown, "the Most Potent High Jinks, and I bring with me one who desires admittance to our strange and awful order."

"Let him enter," commanded the unseen doorkeeper.

Then the professor heard a door open, and as he was slowly marched into a room he was saluted by a chorus of voices, singing a melancholy, dirge-like chant.

As the song ceased the handkerchief was removed from his eyes, and he found himself standing in a room about fifty feet square, dimly illumined with candles.

It had been the dining-room of the hotel, but as Professor Fossil had never entered it before he did not recognize it.

Surrounding the old man were fifteen or more cloaked and masked figures, while on a raised platform sat another of the same sort.

"Yonder sits our Most Sublime King Pin," said the Stoics in chorus. "Bow down to him."

The professor, who was so nervous that he scarcely knew who he was, nodded slightly.

A storm of protestations of the most indignant description arose from the crowd.

"He refuses to bow to our King Pin."

"Slaughter him on the spot!"

"Flay him alive!"

"Boil him in cod liver oil!"

And various other suggestions were made.

"Gentleman," stammered the professor, "I protest that I meant no disrespect. I——"

"Then get down on your hands and knees and show a proper respect for our most exalted King Pin."

The wretched candidate was forced down until his face touched the dusty floor.

He presently arose, sneezing violently, and the King Pin said:

"I am pleased with your evident appreciation of my great dignity, and shall now proceed with the initiation ceremonies. The first step is to ask you a few questions. Should you refuse to answer any one of them swift punishment will follow."

"I will answer to the b-b-b-best of my ability," replied the professor.

"Very well. Were you—or perhaps I should say, have you—ever been, at any time in your career, either when very young or in later years, making due allowance for accidents, to the best of your knowledge and belief?"

"I—I don't know what you are talking about," stammered the bewildered pedagogue.

"You do not?"

"No; I cannot make head or tail of your question."

"Tut, tut! Professor Fossil, I have always supposed you to be a man of more than average intelligence."

"So I am."

"It does not seem so from your idiotic replies. Well, I will waive that question and ask another. Have you ever lost your left car?"

"Why, good gracious, can't you see that I haven't?"

"That is no answer to my question."

"Well, then, I never lost it."

"Very good. Had you died when you were eight years, four months and six days old, what would have been your age on the seventeenth day of July last?"

And so forth, and so forth.

The old man was plied with burlesque questions of the most ridiculous sort until his patience was nearly used up.



When the stock of queries was exhausted, the King Pin said:

"Frothingham Fossil, thus far you have met my august approval. We will now proceed to the great test of your worthiness to become a Stoic. High Jinks, blindfold the candidate once more."

Again the handkerchief was tied over the professor's eyes.

"Now," said the King Pin, "you have your choice of three tests of courage and endurance. Which do you prefer—to be left half an hour in a den of hungry lions, to be plunged into a vat of molten metal, or to be sent on a voyage to the River Styx?"

"Which is the easiest?"

"The last, undoubtedly."

"Then I select that one."

"'Tis well. Brethren, feed the lions and put out the fires beneath the vat. Frothingham Fossil chooses to take the awful voyage to the mystic Styx."

And when he reached Fossil Hall, half frozen, all was peace and quiet.

Twenty or more grinning faces were looking from as many windows, but the old man did not see them.

"We shall see what we shall see!" he hissed as he entered the house. "The end is not yet."

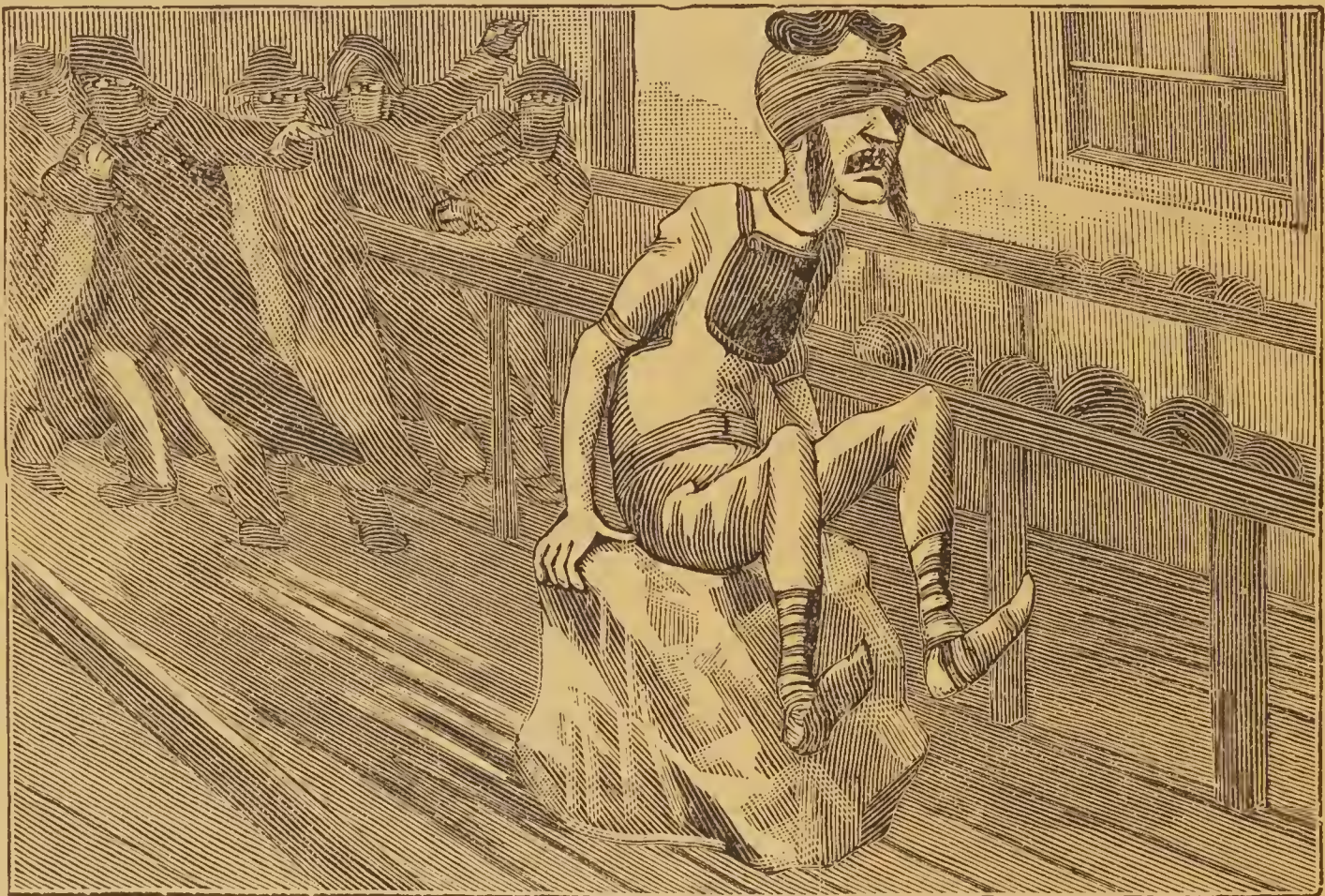
And he was right on that point.

## CHAPTER VI.

### GAWKLEY "IN THE SOUP."

As some other great man has said, "Life is short."

If it wasn't—if we could all live to be as old as Methuselah or Susan B. Anthony—there would be time enough to relate all the rackets perpetrated by our



"LET HER GO!" ORDERED THE KING PIN. THE "STOICS" GAVE THE CAKE OF ICE A SHOVE, AND OFF IT WENT DOWN THE ALLEY WITH THE PROFESSOR ON IT.

Then the "Stoics" took the wretched professor to the old bowling alley at the other end of the building.

Having removed nearly all his garments, they seated him on a large cake of ice at one end of the alley.

"Let her go!" ordered the King Pin.

The "Stoics" gave the cake a shove, and off it went down the alley, with the professor on it.

And at the other end of the alley the old man was dumped into a big tub of ice-cold water.

Then a shriek of laughter arose from the crowd.

Professor Fossil picked himself out of the tub in a rage and tore off the handkerchief.

He was alone, but the sound of rapidly retreating footsteps could be heard in the hall.

"Why," he exclaimed, "this is the bowling alley in the Buckingham! I've been imposed upon. I—I've been the victim of another infamous trick!"

The professor had "tumbled."

But too late.

When he had put his garments on and gotten out of the building, all the "Stoics" had disappeared.

young friend, Bolivar; but as we can't—as the author only expects to live as long as the law allows—some of the youth's antics must be omitted.

Professor Fossil was, as we have seen, his principal victim, but some of his fellow-pupils occasionally came in for a rap.

There were several lads who, like himself, were practical jokists, and these were always putting up jobs on each other; and Henderson Gawkley was considered a butt for the whole school.

Gawkley, as has been shown, was not a general favorite.

This was entirely his own fault.

Upon his arrival at Fossil Hall he had "turned up his nose" at the other lads.

Blue blood was his specialty.

He was one of the Gawkleys of Gawkley Hall, and a direct descendant of Sir Plantagenet Gawkley, of Bumpshire, England.

For this reason he thought he ought to be treated with great deference by the other lads.



Was he?

Not to a phenomenal extent, as the reader has observed.

Nor was Professor Fossil at all awed by his aristocratic pretensions.

Gawkley's blood might be dark blue in color, but his bills were always in arrears; for the Gawkleys had met with "reverses," and the legendary Gawkley Hall had long since passed out of their hands.

The professor preferred a pupil with ordinary crimson blood and cash to an aristocrat without the "needful."

But in spite of his pretensions, Gawkley might have attained some popularity with his comrades if he had not turned out to be a tale-bearer and—as the boys put it—a "sneak."

This got all hands "down on him," and his life at Fossil Hall was not a particularly hilarious one.

It happened that Gawkley heard all about Professor Fossil's initiation as a member of the "Ancient Order of Stoics," and, unmindful of his past experiences, made an attempt to give the snap away to the old man.

The result was as usual—the professor refused to listen to him.

"That will do," he stormed. "If you know so much about it you must have been concerned in the affair yourself. This being the case, I shall chastise you as you deserve."

And he did.

The interview, which took place in the professor's private office, was overheard by some of the boys, and in a short time the whole school knew all about it.

The lads decided that Gawkley had only received what he deserved, and they unanimously agreed that he ought to have more for telling tales out of school.

It was suggested that some sort of a job be put up on him, and of course all hands turned to Bolivar and his pal for advice.

The two youths were found ready.

"I've been thinking about this before," said our hero, promptly, "and I have struck a scheme that may give us a little fun and Gawkley a lesson."

"Out with it."

"Well, since we have frozen him out on account of the way he tried to peach on us, he spends a good deal of his leisure time sitting by the window in his room."

"Yes."

"He has the window open, too; do any of you fellows know why?"

Nobody knew.

"Then I'll tell you," said Bolivar. "Oh, I'm dead on to him. He's carrying on a handkerchief flirtation with old Squire Bulldozer's daughter."

"Is that so?" yelled a dozen of the boys together, scenting fun at once.

"Yes. He can see the Bulldozer house from his window, and he and the girl sit there and wave their handkerchiefs at each other like a pair of idiots for an hour at a time."

"Well," asked one of the lads, "what are you going to do about it?"

"Cure him. We'll get under his window this afternoon and repeat a conversation that we'll arrange especially for his benefit."

And Bolivar went on to give the particulars of his scheme.

His pal and some of the other fellows suggested additions and improvements, and between them they had soon arranged a plan that bade fair to give Gawkley another lesson.

That afternoon all the boys stationed themselves under his window, and Bolivar asked:

"Say, fellows, is Gawkley up in his room?"

"No," replied half a dozen of the lads, although they all knew perfectly well that he was.

"All right," said Bolivar, "then I'll tell you a little joke I'm going to play on him."

"Go ahead."

By this time Gawkley was craning his head out of the window, and his mouth was open nearly wide enough to take in a football.

But the lads pretended not to see him.

"Maybe you fellows don't know it," said Bolivar, "but old Squire Bulldozer's daughter is dead gone on Gawkley."

"Well, Gawkley is a good-looking fellow," said some one; "but how did you find this out?"

"Well, you see, the girl has sent a letter to Gawkley and it has fallen into my hands. She makes an appointment in it—wants him to call at her house to-night. I'm going to tear up the letter, and when he doesn't call the girl will be insulted, and she'll never have anything more to do with Gawkley."

All the fellows pretended to think this was a great scheme, and one of them asked:

"Where is the letter?"

"I have it here."

"Let's hear it!" chorused the boys.

"All right."

And Bolivar drew the alleged letter from his pocket and read the following:

"Dear Mr. Gawkley: Why can we not know each other better? Papa will be out to-night, and if you will call at eight o'clock I shall be pleased to see you. Tell the servant that you have come by appointment.

"Till eight o'clock,

"Your sincerely,

"BIRDIE BULLDOZER."

"It's a pity not to give the letter to Gawkley," said one of the lads.

"He'll never see it," said Bolivar. "Now, fellows, keep mum."

"Sure."

"We won't say a word."

And the group moved away.

"Yes, you think you're awfully smart, don't you, Bolivar Bones?" chuckled Gawkley, as he drew in his head. "But I guess I'm about as fly as you and your pal rolled into one. It isn't every one that would have been sharp enough to find out your plot as I have."

And Gawkley strutted around the room, feeling as if he had done an immense thing in accidentally overhearing the boys.

"That girl is awfully stuck on me," he continued, arranging his tie in the glass and smirking at his reflected image. "Well, I shall be there to-night sure, and next Sunday I'll see her to church. The other fellows will be wild with envy when they see me in the Bulldozer pew. By jingo! that girl has got good taste; she knows a gentleman when she sees one, if nobody else in Hocusville does."

Yes, Gawkley was determined to keep the supposed appointment—and he did.

At about ten minutes before eight he sneaked out of the college grounds, arrayed in his best.



It was against the rules of the institution to go out in the evening without express permission from Professor Fossil, but Gawkley felt so sure that the permission would not be granted that he did not ask it, thinking that he would trust to luck to get back without discovery.

He was not the only one who was out that evening; Bolivar, his pal, and several others were concealed near Squire Bulldozer's house to see the fun, if there was any.

And there was.

Gawkley rang the squire's bell with an air of importance.

Squire Bulldozer was a great man, but was not he a Gawkley, of Gawkley Hall?

To be sure he was.

To the servant who came to the door he said:

"Is Miss Bulldozer in?"

The girl hesitated.

She recognized in the visitor a Fossil Hall boy, and Fossil Hall boys were not in very good repute in the village.

"Who shall I say wants to see her?"

"Mr. Gawkley, of Gawkley Hall."

And the youth pushed his way past his interrogator and waltzed gayly into the parlor.

He had scarcely seated himself when a heavy footstep sounded in the hallway outside.

It was a footstep altogether too heavy to be perpetrated either by Miss Birdie or the servant girl.

The festive youth was not left long in doubt as to who was responsible for the disturbance.

Squire Bulldozer entered the room, taking strides about six feet in length.

It was evident from his general appearance that he was slightly annoyed.

So was Gawkley, for he had not for a moment considered the possibility of an interview with the squire.

The note had stated that he would not be at home, but there he was.

We may whisper into the reader's ear that Squire Bulldozer had also received a note, stating that Gawkley was a "masher" of the most aggravated type, and warning him against the youth.

The note was anonymous, but the reader will have no trouble in guessing who sent it.

"Well, young man, what do you want?" demanded the squire, fiercely.

"I j-just called," stammered Gawkley.

"Yes," interrupted the squire, "you just called to see my daughter, but you won't see her; and you'll get out quicker than you came in. Here goes!"

And he lifted the youth and precipitated him through the open window.

As he fell with a dull, sickening thud on the lawn below, Squire Bulldozer muttered:

"Guess that'll learn him an' the rest o' them Fossil Hall boys a lesson."

Simultaneously with this remark the sound of laughter in youthful voices arose on the night air.

"Didn't stop long, did you, Gawkley?"

"That was an elegant flying leap."

"Please do it again, Gawkley; I was looking the other way."

"Isn't Gawkley swell to-night? Wonder where he connected with that red necktie?"

Etcetera, etcetera.

As the unlucky Gawkley arose, brushed several bush-

els of mud from various parts of his exquisite toilet and limped toward the gate, he sniffed:

"All right, you fellows; I'll just let Professor Fossil know about this—you see if I don't."

This threat was greeted with a grand laugh by all the boys, who immediately started for the Hall, taking a short cut, and arriving there several minutes before their victim.

They succeeded in gaining an entrance and reaching their rooms unseen.

But Gawkley, with his usual luck, was confronted by Professor Fossil as he entered the door.

"What is the meaning of this?" thundered the old man. "Out after eight o'clock without permission? This amazes me, even from you."

"I'll explain all as soon as I change my clothes, professor," sniveled the youth. "But I wasn't the only one out, professor. There are a lot of others, and Bolivar Bones and his pal are with them, and——"

"Stop!" commanded the professor. "Not another word until I have investigated this matter! Bolivar Bones, you say, is out?"

"Yes, sir."

"Go into my private office and remain there until I return. I will go to their rooms and see if they are absent; and if they are, be assured that justice shall be meted out."

"Now," chuckled Gawkley, who did not imagine that the boys could have returned already, "I'll be even with 'em at last."

But as Professor Fossil neared the dormitories he heard the sweet voices of Bolivar and his pal warbling in unison:

"Fossil Hall, Fossil Hall!

Best appointed school of all.

There's none like it far or near;

I'm so glad that I go here!"

The old man's blood fairly boiled with indignation as these beautiful and touching lines greeted his ears.

"It is outrageous," he muttered, wrathfully, "that Gawkley should dare to calumniate two such boys as these! However, I will not permit possible prejudice to warp my judgment. I will boldly accuse these lads of the misdemeanor of which Gawkley asserts they have been guilty. Should they manifest signs of guilt I shall change my opinion of them; should they prove to be innocent, Gawkley shall suffer!"

In the meantime Bolivar and his pal were chanting the second verse:

"Fossil Hall, Fossil Hall!

Parents should not fail to call.

Fossil is our teacher's name;

All creation knows his fame."

And as the old professor flung open the door and entered the room they were rendering the third and last verse:

"Fossil Hall, Fossil Hall!

There can be no doubt at all

That it is the very best;

We care naught for all the rest."



By this time the old man was fully satisfied that the two boys were as pure as the driven snow, and it would have taken a pile-driver to knock the idea out of his head; but nevertheless, assuming an air of severity as he entered the room, he said:

"Boys, you were out!"

And he struck an attitude.

But of course Bolivar and his pal had heard him coming, and the former responded innocently:

"Yes, professor, I know we were out of tune, but we will try to do better the next time."

"I mean," said the professor, "that you have been off this evening."

"Off the key?" interposed Bolivar's pal, earnestly. "Yes, sir, we knew it, and we tried very hard to do better; because, as you are the composer of the song, we thought we ought to do it full justice. Bolivar, shall we try it again?"

"You need not at present," interrupted Professor Fossil, yanking his aged features into the semblance of a

The old man did not reply in words.

He simply grabbed the old rattan that lay on top of the desk and began business.

The reader can imagine all the rest; we will simply indicate what occurred during the next few minutes by a series of artistically executed stars.

Bolivar and his "crowd" did not, as we have said, confine themselves to victimizing Professor Fossil and Gawkley; they played pranks on each other from time to time.

Bolivar was, of course, the leader of the practical jokers, but his pal and one or two other fellows ran neck and neck, so to speak; and one of the lads referred to was the son of a wealthy New York banker, and rejoiced in the name of Dolittle Softsnap.

Softsnap did not hold the high place in his classes that Bolivar and his pal did; not from any lack of ability, but because he was too lazy to work.



HE LIFTED THE YOUTH AND PRECIPITATED HIM THROUGH THE OPEN WINDOW, AND HE FELL WITH A DULL, SICKENING THUD ON THE LAWN BELOW.

smile. "I see that I was mistaken, and—— But no matter. Good-night, boys."

And he waltzed out.

Perhaps the boys did not have a grand laugh when he was gone.

They did, but the old man did not hear it; he would not have heard it if it had been a good deal louder.

He was too mad.

Gawkley had again deceived him, and he felt that no punishment would be too great for that unfortunate youth.

When he re-entered the private office he found the last of the Gawkleys awaiting him, his face wreathed in smiles.

The lad thought he had done a big thing, and was at last to have honors heaped upon him.

But Professor Fossil was not heaping honors that evening.

"Well, professor," smiled the youth, "you found that I told the truth, did you not?"

But as a jokist he was always ready for business, and he had a good deal of talent in that line.

He had victimized most of the other fellows, and they were all wild to "get hunk" with him.

One evening an opportunity accidentally occurred.

Ten of the boys had obtained leave of absence to attend a lecture in the village.

The lecture was over early, and the lads did not hurry back to the Hall, but took a promenade on the village street.

While they were walking, Softsnap took his handkerchief from his pocket, and as he did so a ten-dollar bill flitted out, too, and fell on the sidewalk.

Softsnap did not see it, but all the rest of the fellows did.

Bolivar picked it up, and, "giving the wink" to the rest, said:

"Hello, boys! I've found a tenner!"

His pal caught on at once and shouted:

"Divide, then!"



"I'll tell you what we'll do, fellows," said Bolivar; "we'll draw for the bill."

"Draw for it?" said Softsnap, interrogatively.

"Certainly. Here are the cards. I'll just step into the post-office and mark a cross on nine of them and a cipher on the other. Then we'll mix them all up in a hat, and each of us will draw one. The fellow getting the cipher will be given the bill, but he'll have to treat the crowd."

All agreed to this, and Bolivar rushed into the post-office—where there was writing material—and marked the cards.

But he did not do it exactly as he had suggested; instead, he marked all the cards with ciphers.

When he went out again he got his pal, who understood the trick, to take Softsnap aside while he explained to the other fellows what they were to do.

Well, the drawing took place, and all the lads professed to have drawn crosses except Softsnap, who shouted gleefully:

"I've got the cipher!"

"Then here's the ten-dollar bill," said Bolivar, handing it over with a regretful air. "Now, I suppose you are going to blow us off?"

"Of course I am," returned Softsnap; and he took the entire crowd to the village restaurant, where they ate ice-cream, cake and other luxuries until their capacity was exhausted, and two-thirds of the ten-dollar bill was gone.

Softsnap did not learn the truth until the next day; and when he did he accepted it with a better grace than Professor Fossil would if he had been in his place.

## CHAPTER VII.

### PROFESSOR FOSSIL GROWETH GIDDY.

We now come to a most eventful period in the career of the eminent but eccentric Professor Fossil.

The old man suddenly became very absent-minded.

He would sit for fifteen or twenty minutes at a time gazing at the ceiling in rapt meditation.

Ever and anon, and sometimes even oftener, a smile would convulse his features, making them even more awful than when in repose.

He seemed to have lost all interest in everything.

He even neglected his favorite amusement of flogging Henderson Gawkley, and for at least four consecutive days that youth had a high old time, as it were.

The boys propelled spit-balls at each other, and the usually eagle-eyed professor knew nothing about it; they spread story-papers out on their desks and read them by the hour, and the old man was oblivious of the fact.

One lad stated in reply to a question that Kalamazoo was the capital of Massachusetts; another asserted that America was discovered by Lord Bacon, and a third maintained that four times twelve were sixty-nine; and in each case the professor smilingly and absently replied:

"Correct; very good, indeed."

What was the matter with the learned pedagogue?

Was his giant brain flopping around on its throne?

The boys were a good deal puzzled until our gifted

hero, Bolivar Bones, offered a solution of the mystery.

"Fellows," he said after school one day, when he and a chosen few of his friends met on the playground, "I've found out what ails the prof."

"What?" chorused his companions.

"He's in love."

"Rats!"

"What are you giving us, Bolivar?"

"Come off!"

These and other similar exclamations and admonitions greeted the apparently absurd statement.

But Bolivar maintained his stand.

"It's so, and I can prove it."

"Go ahead and do it, then," said one of his comrades.

"I will. You've all noticed how many letters the prof. gets lately? He'll sit and read them over and over again during lesson hours, and pay no more attention to us than if we were not there."

"That's so."

"Well, those letters are from his girl."

"You only think so."

"I know so."

"Prove it."

"I will."

And Bolivar drew several well-filled envelopes from his pocket, adding:

"Here are the letters themselves to prove it."

"Where did you get them?" demanded four or five of the lads in unison.

"They fell out of the old man's pocket this morning and I collared them. They're from a Miss Matilda Fussanfeathers, of Boodleville."

Here one of the fellows who hailed from Boodleville, a village about ten miles distant, interposed with:

"By Jingo, Bolivar has got it straight! Professor Fossil was in love years ago with Matilda Fussanfeathers. I've often heard my folks talk about it. Her father is pretty well off, and his blood is sky-blue, and the prof. at that time was only a poor schoolmaster on a country salary. Old man Fussanfeathers broke off the engagement, and Professor Fossil left the place. Now Miss Fussanfeathers is an old maid, and as ugly as a blond burlesque fairy. I supposed they'd forgotten all about each other long ago."

"I understand it all now," said Bolivar. "Well, they haven't forgotten each other; they're dead in love, and that's what makes the old man so neglectful of his duties. Fellows, don't you think we ought to teach them a lesson?"

"You've got a new racket, I can see, Bolivar," said one of the fellows. "Well, what is it?"

"I'll tell you in a minute; but first let me read you a few dozen of their letters. Here is the earliest one I have got. Just listen to this."

And the young rascal read as follows:

"Thursday Evening.

"Dearest Baby—You begged me to call you Baby, Frothingham, and now I have done so. Am I not a silly, giddy little thing?"

The boys set up a snort of disgust at this, but Bolivar commanded silence by a gesture, and went on:

"Do you still think of your little Tootsey? Do you love her as much as you did at half-past eight Sunday evening? Oh, if you ceased to love me, Baby, I think



I should become very, very ill. I have lost half a pound since we renewed our engagement, and now eat only three meals a day and sleep but ten hours out of the twenty-four. What a strange thing love is, is it not?

"Do not let those horrid boys worry you too much, Baby. I fear you are not strong enough to teach them.

"I think papa suspects us. Yesterday I saw him loading his gun, and he is now out in the back yard sharpening grandpa's sword on the doorstep. He said at the breakfast table this morning that when he was young he used to be known as the Worst Man in Boodleville; and he also stated that he had grown more wicked with age, and would think nothing of making head-cheese of a man who aroused his evil passions. But I know my Baby would be only too glad to die for me; and if Fate should so will it I should keep his little grave decorated with choice, though inexpensive, flowers during a large majority of the warm weather.

"Write soon, Baby. Take good care of your health. Eat two of those cough-drops I gave you every hour until relieved, and avoid the night air. I am knitting a pair of wristlets for you with your monogram on them. Tie a piece of red flannel around your throat every night, and be very careful of your diet.

"Ever your own most devoted MATILDA."

"How's that, fellows?" asked Bolivar, looking up.

"Worst I ever heard."

"No wonder the prof. is sick."

"Gives me a pain to listen to it."

"She ought to go and fall off a church steeple."

These and other irreverent and unsympathetic comments were made by the lads.

"Let's have another," suggested our hero's pal.

"Well, here's a copy of one of his own letters that the professor kept," said Bolivar. "Just lend me your ears and tell me how this strikes you."

And he read this:

"Tuesday Evening.

"Dearest Tootsey—After the bustle and turmoil of the day, spent among rude and unsympathetic boys whom my soul loathes, how refreshing it is to seclude myself in my study and commune with Nature and you! Yes, Frothingham Fossil, the great scholar, is thinking of you and you alone to-night. I think that you thoroughly understand all the details of our elopement. I shall be under your window with a ladder at eleven o'clock Friday night. Be in readiness. We will hasten to the residence of the village pastor, who will make us one. Let your father suspect nothing; and, above all, see that the dog is chained, or fed arsenic. On Saturday we will go to your father and crave the paternal blessing, which we shall doubtless receive. Till then, adieu.

Your loving

"FROTHY."

The boys smiled vociferously as they listened to this epistle from the gifted pen of their aged instructor.

"Now," said Bolivar, "here is the old girl's reply:

"Dearest Baby—I shall be in readiness at eleven o'clock Friday evening. Was so agitated when I received your sweet note last evening that I could eat nothing for supper except five pork chops, half a dozen

potatoes, three cups of coffee and a loaf of bread. At this rate I shall soon waste away. Oh, how my heart beats as I think of the important step I am about to take! Papa is filing Towser's teeth this evening. He says it is well to be prepared for emergencies. Can he suspect?

"I am so agitated that I can scarcely cling to my pen. I must go down to the pantry and consume half a dozen boiled apple dumplings; they usually calm me more than anything else when I have one of my nervous spells. Once more, au revoir,

"YOUR BIRDIE."

The remarks of the boys about these eloquent and impassioned letters were, we regret to say, anything but complimentary.

"Well, what's your racket, Bolivar?" asked one of the lads. "Are we in it?"

"You can be present as witnesses," said Bolivar. "My scheme is to elope with Miss Fussanfeathers myself."

"You?"

"Just so."

And Bolivar proceeded to explain his racket.

Late Friday afternoon, while Professor Fossil was engaged in giving his intellectual countenance an artistic shave, the following telegram was handed him:

"To Professor Frothingham Fossil, Fossil Hall, Hocusville:

"Do not come to-night. All is discovered. Will write. MATILDA."

The old man rushed around the room, tearing his hair.

"Matilda—and the fortune—lost to me just as I thought them once more within my grasp! This is awful! But I will not despair. I shall doubtless receive a letter explaining all in the morning; in the meantime I must be calm, collected and philosophical."

But he found it pretty hard to be either.

The first part of that Friday evening was dull and monotonous to the wretched professor, but the latter part was lively enough.

But we anticipate.

A wagon loaded with half a dozen of the Fossil Hall boys left Hocusville that evening for Boodleville.

They were a jolly party, and were in for all the fun they could get.

And they got plenty all along the road.

But they were all impatiently awaiting the grand climax, which was to occur when they arrived at their destination.

When they reached Boodleville it was very dark, the sky being covered with clouds.

This just suited Bolivar's purpose.

Leaving their horse and wagon in a place of safety, the boys started on foot for Mr. Fussanfeather's residence, a large, square, old-fashioned building in the suburbs of the place.

When they were near the house Bolivar parted from his companions and went on alone.

He was pretty careful about the manner in which he approached the house, for he did not care to arouse the animosity of Towser, who was a large, high-strung bulldog with impulsive ways and a full set of upper and under teeth.



Towser's kennel, he knew, was on the other side of the house from that in which Miss Fussanfeathers' room was situated, and he hoped that by using great caution he would be able to avoid attracting the dog's attention.

He succeeded in raising the ladder, borrowed from a neighboring carpenter's, to the window, which was cautiously raised.

"Is that you, Baby?" inquired a squeaky female voice.

"Yes, Birdie," returned Bolivar, imitating the professor's well-known accent.

"Don't be afraid of Towser; I have given him something to make him sleep."

"All right; come down the ladder, and make haste."

The elderly maiden obeyed with all possible alacrity, not suspecting for an instant that the individual at the foot of the ladder was not Professor Frothingham Fossil.

She made pretty quick time, and in a moment was wrapped in the arms of Bolivar.

"Not at home?" shrieked Miss Fussanfeathers.

"No; he has gone out of town to attend the funeral of his mother-in-law's only son-in-law."

"What shall we do?"

"I have arranged all."

"How?"

"A train for New York is due in twenty-nine minutes. We will take it and be married in the great metropolis."

"Oh, Frothingham!"

"Just so. But there is the railroad station yonder, outlined against the wintry sky. You go and wait there for me. We must not be seen together, but when the train comes I will be by your side."

"Oh, I'm so afraid!" whimpered the elderly beauty.

"Me, too; but we must not think of that. Go! We meet anon."

The old girl "streaked it" for the railway station, while Bolivar dematerialized.

Now about half an hour after the departure of the



THE PROFESSOR FELL AT FULL LENGTH. WITH A WILD WAR-WHOOP, TOWSER RUSHED OUT AND BEGAN BUSINESS IN THE LINE TO WHICH HE HAD DEVOTED HIS LIFE.

"Phew! you have been imbibing onions!" remarked that youth, turning his head away.

"Yes, they are so good for the nerves, you know," warbled the maiden.

"So I have heard," returned Bolivar. "Well, in the future you had better give your nerves full play if onions are the only cure. But make haste and let me assist you over the fence."

This task was accomplished just as Towser, who had recovered from his sleeping draught, came bounding up, uttering a series of excited remarks in the dog language.

A few words from his mistress quieted him, however, and then the happy pair went their way.

"Oh, is not this awful, Frothingham?" gurgled the old maid.

"Very, indeed," replied Bolivar, keeping his hat pulled down over his eyes so that his companion would not "catch on" to the deception. "And the worst of it is that I have just learned that the village pastor is not at home."

boys for Boodleville Professor Fossil received a note which read thusly:

"You have been deceived. The telegram was false. Miss Fussanfeathers is about to elope with another. Fly to Boodleville. You will find her waiting at the railway station for her lover. A FRIEND."

The old professor was wild.

He instantly sent for Phelim.

In about four minutes old Mark Antony was harnessed to the buggy, and Professor Fossil and Phelim were bowling along toward Boodleville as fast as the antiquated steed would go.

The boys, who of course had gotten up the letter, had timed everything so well that the old man reached the village just at the right moment.

He had to pass Miss Fussanfeathers' residence on his way to the railway station.

Seeing the ladder, he ordered Phelim to stop the buggy.



The next moment he had jumped out, and was clambering over the fence.

His foot slipped, and he fell at full length.

With a wild war-whoop Towser rushed out and began business in the line to which he had devoted his life.

He showed that by strict attention to business he had attained a high degree of proficiency, and by his untiring efforts he made the professor utter howls that were heard half a mile away.

Were the boys around?

You may be sure that they were.

They were taking in the show and enjoying it hugely.

Old man Fussanfeathers appeared at the window, yelling:

"Hold him, Towser! I guess I won't be worried by any more o' them chicken thieves in a hurry."

In a few moments the old fellow came down half-dressed, and armed with a gun, a cutlass and a lantern.

As his master approached, Towser uttered a short bark, as much as to say:

"Catch on to this, boss! Who says I don't attend strictly to business?"

As the old man turned the rays of the lantern on the wretched professor's face he exclaimed:

"Why—why, it's you, Fossil!"

"Yes, it is I," returned the professor, feebly. "Call this dog off, will you? I'm nearly killed."

Mr. Fussanfeathers called the dog off, and demanded:

"What are you doing here?"

Before Professor Fossil could reply, a sharp female voice interposed with:

"He's here to play a trick on both of us, and he's been served just right."

The moon emerged from behind a cloud and revealed Miss Fussandfeathers standing outside the fence, puffing and blowing with fatigue.

"I've just returned from the depot," she said. "He told me to wait there for him and he'd take me to New York and make me his bride. The train came and went, and he did not return, and I——"

"It is not true——" began the professor.

"Oh, you wretch!" hissed Miss Fussanfeathers.

"You villain!" snorted the old man.

"Wow-wow!" barked Towser.

Then all three set on the professor together, and perhaps they didn't have a festive time!

According to tradition they did.

When they were all tired out, and the old professor was half dead, they "let up."

By this time the neighbors had been aroused and quite a crowd had collected.

Professor Fossil struggled painfully to his feet.

His new suit was a wreck, his wig was gone, his glass eye was turned wrong side out, and his face was broken in several places.

"I call upon all present to witness——" he began, but Towser interrupted him with a growl and a threatening look, and he subsided.

"Constable," bawled Mr. Fussanfeathers, catching sight of that doughty official in the crowd, "arrest this man. I will appear against him in the morning."

And so, despite his indignant protestations, Professor Fossil was dragged off to jail.

But the end was not yet.

There was more trouble ahead for all concerned in the affair.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### PROFESSOR FOSSIL ON THE WAR-PATH.

While Professor Frothingham Fossil was being lugged off to a dungeon cell, his hopeful pupils, headed by Bolivar, were on their way back to Hocusville, their peals of silvery laughter awakening echoes all along the road, as they discussed the events of the evening.

"But it was kind of rough on the old prof.," said Bolivar's pal. "He was a total wreck when the constable gathered him in."

"Oh, it's good discipline for him," said Bolivar. "Nothing does a man so much good as to suffer. Haven't you often heard the professor say so himself? Besides, he'll come out all right; he was not born to die young."

As it turned out, the youth was right.

At about noon the next day, while the boys were amusing themselves in the playground, they were amazed to see Professor Fossil alight from a jaunty carriage at the entrance to the grounds, and, after shaking hands cordially with the other inmate of the vehicle—no less a person than Mr. Fussanfeathers—gayly trip up the graveled walk, humming a cheerful tune.

Solomon in all his glory never had a suit of clothes like that in which the professor was now arrayed.

A showy pair of check trousers, a neat diagonal coat and vest, a four-in-hand tie, a shining new silk hat and patent leather boots completed his outfit.

He bore very little resemblance to the wretched individual who had been yanked off to the lockup on the previous evening.

"'Oh, there's nothing half so sweet in life  
As love's young dream!'"

caroled the professor as he skipped along, twirling his little cane and smiling right and left.

"The prof. has struck luck," commented Bolivar. "Wonder where he got it?"

Just then the old man caught sight of the lads.

"Ah, boys," he warbled; "beautiful morning, is it not? All nature seems to smile."

"Oh, professor," gushed Bolivar, "we are all so glad to see you back! We were so worried because you did not return last night! I scarcely slept a wink!"

"Never permit yourselves to worry on my account. Frothingham Fossil is fully able to take care of himself under any and all possible circumstances," said the old man pompously.

"We were afraid that you might have been stolen and held for ransom," explained Bolivar, in his simple, childlike way. "Then we were not sure but that you had absent-mindedly walked into the river and got filled up with water to such an extent that you were too heavy to rise."

"No such calamity befell me, fortunately," returned the professor. "I spent the night at the residence of a friend in Boodleville. Ahem! boys, I have news that will surprise you."

"Oh, professor!" chipped in Bolivar's pal, who had kept quiet just as long as he could; "you have aroused my curiosity. What is it? Are you going to give us another of your inimitable lectures on science?"



"No, my lad, but I—well, I am going to be married."

And the old professor positively blushed as he made this girlish confession.

The luckless Henderson Gawkley giggled hysterically.

Professor Fossil turned fiercely upon him.

"To your room, sir, to your room!" he howled. "I have another account to settle with you anon."

As Gawkley shuffled off, sniveling as usual, Bolivar pranced up and grabbed the old man's hand.

"Oh, professor," he cried, "do not allow anything to ruffle your spirits on this great occasion. May I be allowed, on behalf of my fellow-pupils, to offer you our sincere congratulations?"

"Ahem! Very gratifying, I am sure," smirked the professor. "Young gentlemen, I accept your congratulations with pleasure."

"May I take the great liberty of asking the lady's name?" added Bolivar. "It must be some very eminent woman, I am sure. Is it Mrs. Langtry, professor? or Sarah Bernhardt, or——"

"The lady," interrupted the old man, with dignity, "is doubtless known to some of you. She is Miss Matilda Fussanfeathers, of Boodleville."

"The beautiful Miss Fussanfeathers," exclaimed Bolivar, rolling his eyes. "Oh, professor, what a fortunate man you are!"

"Ahem!" returned the old man, not exactly willing to take that one-sided view of the matter. "It is not every woman who could win a man of Frothingham Fossil's eminence."

"I should say not, professor," acquiesced Bolivar.

As the professor started for the house the boys began to indulge in speculations as to how this extraordinary change in the aspect of affairs had occurred.

"Things didn't turn out just the way you thought they would," said one of the lads, half maliciously, for several of his schoolmates were beginning to grow jealous of Bolivar on account of his popularity. "Wait till the old man finds out about that job and you'll get a warming."

Before Bolivar could reply the professor, who had now reached the house, turned and called out:

"Bolivar Bones!"

"Yes, sir," returned our hero, meekly.

"Come to my private office; I wish to speak with you alone."

"Yes, sir."

"Now you're in for it."

"I thought it was about time he caught on."

"Sorry for you, Bolivar."

Our hero paid no attention to these remarks, but ambled toward the Hall, a pleasant smile on his face.

He felt pretty sure that fresh honors were about to be heaped on him, and he was not far out of the way in his reckoning.

When he reached the private office, the old man locked the door with a mysterious air, and bade him be seated.

Bolivar stationed himself on the extreme edge of a chair, and asked with the humblest air imaginable:

"Why do you wish to see me, professor? I trust that my studies have been satisfactory. I know that in a moment of thoughtlessness I stated last Wednesday that the moon was eleven miles nearer the earth than it really is, but I have bitterly regretted the error ever since, and shall never make a similar mistake again while my mental faculties remain unimpaired."

"It is not about anything of the sort that I wish to see you," said the professor pettishly. "Bolivar, you lay too much stress on these trifles."

"But, professor," replied Bolivar, "you always teach us in your inimitable way that we should pay the strictest attention to trifles; that only thus can we hope to reach perfection."

"Well, never mind that now," said the old man. "It is about something in no way connected with your studies that I wish to consult you."

"What can it be, professor?"

"Bolivar," and the professor lowered his voice to a whisper; "Bolivar, I, Frothingham Fossil, have been the victim of a most infamous conspiracy."

Bolivar uttered a howl that made the old man jump.

"Oh, Professor Fossil, say no more! I fear I cannot bear it."

"For goodness sake, Bolivar," said the professor, "restrain yourself. Don't you imagine that any one has any nerves except yourself?"

Bolivar began to apologize profusely, but Professor Fossil interrupted him impatiently.

"That will do. Now listen, Bolivar, for I require a service at your hands."

"Whatever it is, professor," asserted the youth, "I will render it cheerfully. Do you desire me to lay down my life for you?"

"Nonsense, Bolivar! Do not draw so largely on your imagination. Now listen and keep quiet if you can."

"Yes, sir."

"Last night, Bolivar," and the professor's voice sank to a whisper again, "I was to have eloped with Miss Fussanfeathers."

"Oh, how romantic, Professor Fossil!" gurgled Bolivar.

"Some enemy gained a knowledge of my purpose, and a series of false telegrams and other messages were sent, by which both the young lady and myself were put to the utmost inconvenience."

"Oh, professor!"

"A fiend in human form attempted to abduct Miss Fussanfeathers, and had the audacity to attempt to personate me!"

"I never heard of such audacity in my life!" gasped Bolivar.

"Nor any one else, I imagine," returned the professor.

"And where were you while the wretch was attempting to be you, professor?"

"Where was I? I was engaged in a terrific combat with four blood-hounds and six masked men."

"Good gracious!"

"I fought heroically, but the odds were against me."

"I should say so, professor. If it had been only two blood-hounds and four men, you could undoubtedly have vanquished them with one blow of your powerful fist."

Professor Fossil looked sharply into the boy's face, but it wore an expression of the utmost candor; there was not the slightest suspicion of sarcasm in his clear young voice.

"Ahem! just so, Bolivar," went on the old man.

And he proceeded to give the youth a highly-colored account of the adventure of the previous evening, about which our readers have already been fully informed.

"At last," he said in conclusion, "I was overpowered, and suffered the ignominy of arrest. I lay all night in a loathsome cell."

"Oh, Heaven!" interrupted Bolivar.

"But this morning I sent for Mr. Fussanfeathers and explained all to him. My eloquence conquered. Grasp-



ing my hand tightly in his own, he said in broken accents: 'Professor Fossil, your heroism is such that I am proud to ask the honor of becoming your father-in-law.' I accepted his offer, and the matter was settled then and there."

"The gods be praised!" howled Bolivar in a tone that would have done credit to his distinguished father in his palmiest days.

Professor Fossil's account of his reconciliation with Mr. Fussanfeathers was not, we regret to say, strictly true.

Like most great men, he had a very lively imagination, which was not always wholly under his control.

The truth of the matter was that he had sent for Mr. Fussanfeathers, and that the two old men, after comparing notes, had discovered that they had both been the victim of a trick.

Mr. Fussanfeathers had withdrawn his complaint against the professor and taken him back to his house.

When Professor Fossil had been supplied with a new

"Naturally, professor."

"And I wish you, Bolivar, to aid me in bringing the villain to justice."

"How can I do that, professor?" asked Bolivar, in genuine surprise.

"By watching the persons whom I suspect and reporting to me if you discover any evidence against them."

"Oh, you suspect some one, Professor Fossil?"

"Assuredly I do, and I am right in my opinion, too."

"Who are the persons?"

"Professor Whaler and Henderson Gawkley."

"But," objected Bolivar. "Gawkley was in bed and asleep when the affair took place; and Professor Whaler left town by the 6:30 train for his regular Saturday vacation."

"How do you know that?" asked the professor, putting on a look of preternatural shrewdness. "Did you see Gawkley in bed?"

"No."



THE YOUTH GAVE A VIOLENT START, FEIGNED EXTREME FRIGHT, AND EXCLAIMED: "OH, PROFESSOR, HOW YOU FRIGHTENED ME!"

outfit, he made a formal proposal for the hand of his old flame.

As he proved that he was in receipt of an ample income from his school, and as Miss Matilda was not growing any younger as the years rolled by, the stern parent withdrew his objections and the couple were engaged.

All this, however, the professor did not tell Bolivar.

When he had finished the glowing tale with which he had seen fit to regale the youth, he said:

"Now, perhaps you wonder why I have told you all this, Bolivar?"

"I do, sir," replied the youth, with an air of the utmost humility; "it seems a great honor for you to show a child like me."

"True, Bolivar, but I have my reasons."

"Of course, professor."

"I have been the victim of a vile trick."

"Yes, sir."

"I wish to discover the identity of the individual who personated me."

"Did you witness Professor Whaler's departure on the train?"

"No, professor."

"Exactly so. Then why do you think them innocent?"

"Because——"

"Explanations are needless, Bolivar. You, with your inexperience in such matters, cannot hope to cope with a man of the world like Frothingham Fossil."

"I suppose not, professor," said Bolivar, humbly.

"Certainly not. No, those two persons are the guilty ones, and I desire to prove it beyond peradventure, and then crush them with the weight of my vengeance."

"Yes, sir."

"Well, Bolivar, watch them closely and report to me on Monday evening. I employed you to do detective work before, and you did not meet with distinguished success. I trust that you will do better this time. You may go."

And the old man turned haughtily to his desk, while Bolivar ambled out with his eyes on the ceiling.



"I'm not going to get Professor Whaler and Gawkley into a scrape on account of what I did myself," mused Bolivar. "I've got to draw the line somewhere. I'll just report to the old man on Monday evening that I couldn't find out anything."

And that is what he did report to the distinguished professor when they were alone together in the private office on Monday evening.

To his surprise, Professor Fossil flew into a violent rage.

"So you have been wasting the past forty-eight hours, have you?" he stormed.

"No, sir, I have not," returned Bolivar.

"Did I not direct you to watch Henderson Gawkley and Professor Wilmington Whaler?"

"You did."

"Then why did you not do it?"

"I did, professor."

"And yet you tell me that you succeeded in learning nothing?"

"I am sure they are both innocent."

"You are sure they are innocent when I tell you that they are guilty! Bolivar, I am more than disappointed in you."

"I——"

"Silence! I thought you a lad of more than usual intelligence, but you prove to be a fool."

And the old man went on using incendiary language of this nature until Bolivar became pretty mad.

He ended with:

"Now, leave my office, and be quick about it. I have no more time to waste with you."

Bolivar left the room about as angry as the professor was.

"A fool, am I? That settles it. I'll see if I can't get hunk with the prof. for that."

The reader who has followed the reckless youth's adventures may be of the opinion that he was more than "hunk" already, but Bolivar did not think so.

After considerable meditation he decided upon a plan for avenging himself upon his instructor.

He knew that there had been "bad blood" between the two professors for some time.

Professor Whaler had asked for a raise of salary several weeks before, and Professor Fossil, being unable to fill his place for the same money, had been obliged to accede to the demand.

He had not done so without a good deal of "kicking," however, and the relations between the two pedagogues had been decidedly strained ever since.

Knowing all this, Bolivar decided to bring matters to a climax if he possibly could.

Since Professor Fossil was "spoiling" for a fight with Professor Whaler, Bolivar resolved that he should have it.

The next morning the august principal of Fossil Hall received this note:

"Professor Fossil—Is it possible that you do not know that Wilmington Whaler is your enemy? He has gone out for the evening; do you know where? To Boodleville, to visit your fiancée, Miss Fussanfeathers. He loves her, and her father favors his suit. You have been deceived by all. Be warned in time. Go at once to the Fussanfeathers' mansion. You will find him there. He may conceal himself, for he fears you; they may deny that he is there. But do not be deceived. Search for him, find him, and avenge yourself. And be-

ware of the boy, Bolivar Bones! A word to the wise is sufficient. NEMESIS."

Professor Fossil swallowed the bait, hook and all.

Wasn't he mad!

He rang for Phelim and ordered that old Mark Antony be hitched to the buggy in double-quick time.

Then he took a deep draught from a black bottle in his closet.

In a few minutes the buggy was ready.

As Professor Fossil left the hall he met Bolivar, who had purposely put himself in the old man's way.

The youth gave a violent start, feigned extreme fright, and exclaimed:

"Oh, professor, how you frightened me!"

Taking this for an evidence of conscious guilt, the old professor snorted out:

"I understand your feelings perfectly, Bolivar."

"D-d-do you, sir?" stammered Bolivar, trembling violently.

"I do, most assuredly. Bolivar, you have made the greatest mistake of your life in attempting to deceive Frothingham Fossil."

And the old man swept on, unconscious that Bolivar was watching his retreating form with a cheerful grin.

The ride to Boodleville was a short one; old Mark Antony had never been forced to a quicker pace in the whole course of his checkered career.

As he stopped, dripping with perspiration, in front of Mr. Fussanfeathers' mansion, Professor Fossil leaped out, saying:

"Wait for me, Phelim; I shall be out shortly."

He was; but he was carried out by one of his prospective father-in-law's servants.

Accounts differ as to what occurred within the mansion; but it is certain that Professor Fossil raised such a riot in his wild pursuit of Professor Whaler—whom he insisted was concealed somewhere in the building—that it became necessary to quiet him with a club.

"Sure," said Phelim, in describing the melancholy occurrence to the boys the next day, "there was such a noise in the house that I t'ought it had been sthruck by an earthquake, so I did. Thin the profissor was fired, wid his collar off, his coat ripped up the back, an' his nose bleedin'; an' old man Fussanfeathers shoutin' afther him: 'Niver inter me house ag'in, ye blagguard, or I'll murther ye intirely.' Sure, 'twas a sorry sight."

It was, indeed, a painful affair.

Investigation proved to the old man that Professor Whaler had been fifty miles away at the time of the sad occurrence, and that he had never seen Miss Fussanfeathers in his life.

Then it struck him that he had again been victimized, and he jumped to the conclusion that the insinuations in the letter against Bolivar were false.

Who was "Nemesis?"

Henderson Gawkley, of course, he thought.

Gawkley was thrashed.

And then things went on in the same old way.

But only for a little while.

The further adventures of Bolivar at the Boarding School will be found in the comical tale, "BONES' BOY BOLIVAR'S PUNISHMENT; OR, EXPELLED FROM FOSSIL HALL," which will be published in No. 803 of the Old Cap. Collier Library, out week after next.



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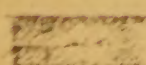
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